AN

ANSWER

TO A

Small Treatise

Call'd

JUST MEASURS;

IN AN

Epistle of Peace and Love

By way of Address, to such as Esteem themselves Elders amongst the People call'd *Quakers*; That they may remove what remains in the way of our Peace.

Printed in the Year, 1693.

Page 9 line 24 for here *read* where *p. 15 l. 12 and r. or p. 16 l. 23 remaines r. remain p. 21 l. 29 of r. or p. 23 l. 16 and r for l. 17 for r and p. 24 l. 30 and r. that is p. 26 l. 22 Servants r Servant p 28 l. 7 And r Or p 31 l. 15 way r may p. 33 l. 16 nor near l. 20 his r this p. 35 l. 22. there is r they are p. 36 l. 13 knew r knew l. 25 serviceable. r most serviceable p. 37 l. 18 to r that is p. 38 l. 30 then r then p. 40 l. 11 Distinction r Definition p. 48 l. 16 at an r about p. 49 l. 29 the r the p. 52 l. 7 Sign r Figure p. 53 l. 24 forth r back p 63 l. 28 Jew r Jews p. 65 l. 17 singly r simply p. 66 l. 2. of r in one l. 34 principal r Principle p. 71 l. 15 universally r and that universally p. 72 l. 19 opinion r Profession p. 76 l. 12 according r. and according p. 78 l. 3 souls r sakes l. 34 Liberty 80 l. 9 is r was 81 l. 2 might r must p. 83 l. 9 opposition p 89 l. 22 alone r above.*

AN

ANSWER to a small Treatise,

CALL'D

Just Measures, in an EPISTLE *of Peace and Love,* &c.

WE have considered this Epistle, stil'd, *Just Measures*, &c. Subscribed *G. P.* Directed to all Dissatisfied among Friends, as well to such as are not seperated, as to such as are; Now though we are in no actual Seperation, yet being truly Dissatisfied, takes occasion to Write as followeth. Who's the Author, is not so much as what is said, considering it seems approved by the Eldership, being sent abroad amongst the Society, as such Books are, as are allowed for Orthodox, therefore in speaking to it, we shall direct our selves to them, not doubting, but as it was Wrote for them, their mind's included; and unto whom can we so well apply our selves for Relief as unto such as have been the Occasion of our Trouble, by bringing into the Society against the Minds of their Brethren, things for which there appears no necessity, and then requiring compliance under the Notion of

Eldership; now if we apply our selves to them, then chiefly to such as seems to be as the Head, and noting Causes by their Effects, this seems setled at *London*, from hence came our Circular Letters that have disturbed Us. And therefore as things are Modeled from hence must come our Voice of Peace if ever Our Divisions be cemented, or our Dissatisfaction removed; but by the way pray let Us know how this headship, as to Government, came to be fixed here, to Us in our Case there seems but two wayes, that is either by the choise of the People, or by the Choice of the Eldership, Now if the Society as such have devolved the Government upon you that reside here: Pray when was this Agreement made, for 'tis needful to know at least the Original of this Constitution, if we are to be concluded by it? But if this Headship be fixed here by the choice of the Eldership, Pray then give Us leave to Capitulate for that Just Liberty we had in the Society, before those things was ruh to this height of Dissatisfaction, as formally being made terms of Communion, whilest We have not gone from Ancient Principles, nor into any thing that is Immoral or evil; if you deny Us this, We must complain 'tis not Government, but something of Tyranny, or Injustice at least that is introduced.

That the Headship as to Government is setled here appears further by the Power being lodged here, for the conveneing of Our Yearly Meetings, as well as by their Assembling here, 'tis here our Orders have their strength, by the Approbation of this confluence. You know Christ Our Lord tells us that *His Kingdom is not of this World*, and therefore we conceive His Government is not set up by such wayes and means as uphold Worldly Power, (addres to *Protestants*

stants Page 232 to 244) if so, we cannot think this is Christs Government, nor like it, which is so like that of the World, both for Contrivance and Order, and if not his, it ought at best to be Subservient to his; on which account You ought to be Cautious that you intrench not upon his Prerogative, who is Lord of Conscience; in short, the Government contended for by you, you must own to be our Lords or yours; Our Lords it can not be, for 'tis certain he uses no other force to uphold his Government, then to set it up, and if he always took it by Patience and Suffering, he will never uphold it by force and Violence (address to *Protestants*, 203 Page to the end of that Head) and therefore when any thing of Violence is used, we may be sure it is none of his, and if not his, then it must be yours, and as yours, you ought not to impose new things, for that destroys that freedom we ought to have and injoy as we are a Free and Voluntary Society; but you tell us this *belongs to the outpart of the Church as we are a Civil Society.*

What's this but to say we may have one sort of Power to Govern the out Part, and another to guide the in; this makes way for Carnal and Unregenerate Men (if they have but a good share of natural parts) to be our Rulers, but you know Christ our Lord tells us, *if the Inside be clean, the outside will be clean also*, and truly all Conformity that wants Conviction or Perswasion can have no acceptance with God, so that all this is but to please Men; but if you will insist that those things are Civil, however you may then take away as well as add, and to take away those things so far as they have given occasion, certainly seems needful; otherwise you may transmit

you

your errours to Posterity, for 'tis on those Foundations you lay for Government, that some others will build, and considering that all Builders on a Religious score, since the Apostasie, have fail'd at least in your judgment; or else how could you have Justified our dissent; on this account you ought to have been the more cautious; for error in the beginning, either in the matter or manner of bringing in things, must be the Ruin of a Christian Superstructure; so that tho the Foundation may have been good you may have professed, yet Hay and Stubble may be Builded, for when you tell us *those are the lesser things about which the Difference is*, (Page 16) they cannot be Fundamentals, and when you say *they concern not God, Faith, Conscience or Religion* (Page 4 and 5) they can be but your Opinions and Judgements; those can have no higher Original then that of Mans reason, which as it is subject to be short, vary, and miscarrie, such things as those ought not to have been brought in as the Lawes of the *Medes* and *Persians*; but Cautiously and by way of Probation. Therefore having now the proofe of the evil consequence of being Positive, where at most you ought but to have recommended: You would do well to Repeal, or at least suspend next Meeting what has been found so fatal to the Unity desired, otherwise you may shew more Power to Rule, then prudence to Govern.

What you have said to others in Addres to *Protestants* (page 62 to 92) both what should be made Terms of Communion, and what should not, deserves your most serious Consideration; for certainly we want nothing of what (you say there) is sufficient for Communion, and if so it is unreasonable to

shut

shut us out for want of that which ought not to be made such, and that in your own sense, pray be consistent for that passage in *Page* 93 deserves not only your Consideration but Application, *and that is if we consider the matter well, I fear* (sayes our Author) *it will be found that the occasion of disturbance in the Church of Christ, hath in most Ages been found to lie on the side of those that had the greatest sway in it, which in our Age is but too true.* We observe this *Epistle* differs much from other Books writ on this Subject, and allowed by the same Authority, if we should Confront this with them they would be like *Babel* Indeed, whilest the same thing is pretended, tis true we are willing to search to the quick, but as we would not make the breach wider then needs must, we shall not at this time compare them together, hoping how ever that the softness of the Stile of this bespeaks a dislike at least of former severities; what is right we are willing to acknowledge, and shall as readily note, What is wrong, concluding it is dangerous to endeavour to heal our hurt slightly; and how ever our endeavour may succeed or be resented; we can in our Defence say, that not only our Arms but our Hearts are open and free to receive you, and what you say as we meet it in the truth and you in the Spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and can add sincerely, that our desire to seek and find that seemless Garment of Our Lord you speak of and not only find it but that we might have it put on as in our beginning, whilest Travellers together in Spirit for the true Rest, which so many have set out to find but miscarryed; but as this Seamless Garment stands not in Identity of an Opinion, nor in the Unity of those Formalities of Form, which respect more the

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manner of doing of a thing then the thing it selfe; therefore all the Builders that have sought it here have erred and will still err, as they thus seek it. For as Truth is contrary to Error, so is Gods way to Mans in this matter, as our own Appollogies for Liberty do abundantly shew; Now if the Unity to be sought for stand not in Opinion, nor in those Formallities of Form as above, it can only be found in the Spirit, where there is a sincerity to God, this Our Lord owns whenever 'tis according to the degree of Light afforded. And that is it which should be seriously enquired after, and this you can hardly deny Us, upon your own Concessions in this *Epistle*, if you are real, otherwise you deceive Us. You confess (*Page* the 2.) that *we are one with you in Judgement in the Worship and Doctrine of Truth*, &c. Now if by *Worship* you mean a true serving of God, and if by *Doctrine of Truth* you intend, as you ought, what concerns Godliness, it can hardly be but you must allow Us sound in the Faith, and Conscientious in what we doe; for 'tis impossible we should be faithful in the greater Things, and false in the less, on this account you ought to allow our reason or indulge us; and therefore considering this, and several other confessions in this Book, may we not hope for the future, that Dissenters and such as are dissatisfied may meet with a more favourable aspect from you, and not only their seperate Meetings Visited in Love by you, but your Meetings free and open in your minds and behaviour to such as come in Love and good will to Visit You, tho in some things dissatisfied with your proceedings; for what can keep up the Difference more then your strangeness, and how can it tend to accommodation, the Thing you pretend to desire

and

and ſeek? Or how can it be Truth, or like it, to keep up this Difference and diſtance to Severities; if not ſome time to rudeneſs; and that with ſuch as agree with you, in your own ſenſe, in all the Eſſentials of Religion, and truly ſerve God for any thing you know or can prove to the contrary, Pray conſider of it.

But to proceed; You ſpeak of the Government to remain in the hands of the Elderſhip, but if Our Lord makes this Elderſhip, does he not alſo make the ſubmiſſion that's neceſſary, for we will ſay we are for good Order, and if the Elders ſet us a good example of humility and ſelfe-denyal, by which we find it is not themſelves they Preach, but Chriſt and his Government they deſire ſhould be ſet up, and not their own: We can readily give them double Honour, by following them as they follow Chriſt; and we are ſure none of you ought to deſire more.

Now if We are only to follow you, as you are the followers of Chriſt, we ought to be ſenſible of it, and that muſt be either by an outward Rule, or by an inward; if the firſt, ſet it forth; if the latter, ſtay till we are convinced or perſwaded, this is fair, here blind Obedience is excluded, and it ought not to be denyed; on this foot we inquire how we muſt know this Elderſhip on whoſe Conduct we may ſafely rely; for where there muſt be a dependance, there ought to be a certainty; pray mind that, to us then as a free and voluntary Society, there ſeems but two wayes to know Elderſhip, that is chiefly after the Spirit, or after the fleſh, that is, after an inward or an outward way; now if we muſt know our Elderſhip after the Spirit, then indeed no matter of your ſetting them forth, for as we are not to believe every Spirit, a liberty

of Examination is reserv'd, and where that ought to be, a choice must be allowed, on this Foot it follows beyond contradiction, we are not Obliged to new things but as convinced or perswaded; and as this is according to Gods dealing with us in our Spiritual travel, so it agrees with our Imbodying as a free and voluntary Society; and grant but this great Truth and Ancient Testimony, and as it may prevent further dissatisfaction, which to us seems greater then you either know or are willing to grant, so it may also help to cure our Division; and how you should deny this to such as was of the Communitie, till your Exclusion by imposing your Opinions, and do still agree with you in the Worship and Doctrine of Truth we can not tell; but if you will say that we are to know our Elders chiefly after the flesh, that is after an outward way; I Answer. Not now to insist on the weakness and insufficiency of this way, we do say then as we are a free and voluntary Society, it is needful, as well as our right, not only to be satisfied in them, but have our choice of them; and then not only know who they are but where they reside, that as on the one hand on occation we may have recourse unto them, so on the other, that thereby we may be secured from being Imposed upon by pretenders.

But if you deny the first, and cannot secure Us in the latter; as we have neither choice in the Eldership, nor power to refuse what is wrong, there is no way left to prevent Ignorance and Slavery; at this door, that thing you call Priest-craft entered, and that distinction of *Clergy* and *Laity*, which must be wrong and insupportable in you, what ever it is in others, we intreat you to consider of it in a cool Mind.

But if you will say (as in this *Epistle* Page 14.) that the

the Government must remain in the hands of such as God hath made Instrument in the gathering of his People, or to this effect, then we Answer, as the case stands, as specious as this is, it is not like to cure our Divisions, but rather to increase them, this being a way to make as many Parties as such Persons to head them, some for *Paul* some for *Apollo*, &c. For 'tis sure under this Notion there is and have been many Elders amongst such as are dissatisfied who may on this foot plead an Equal right to Govern; what then remains this way except you'l fly to that of Antiquity or Number, but as those have been denyed by you to others, we conclude you should not use it; then what's to be done to cure our Divisions and prevent further Dissatisfaction? nothing can do but our Elders [illegible] to throw down their Crowns at the feet of Jesus, that it may appear to be his Government and not their's that's sought. Thus Christ our Lord advised in the case of Difference and conflict, *the Elder is to be as the Younger, and him that Rules, as he that serves, and he that will be the greatest, is to manifest it by being Servant to the rest*; for 'tis certain the Government of Christ our Lord in this case is Uniform and does not vary (tho Men may) using no other way to preserve them he did to gather, for if force, strife, contention, or violence were right at any time, he could as well use it at first as at last. But as he always made his entrance by Patience and Suffering in his Servants, as well as in himself, it is certain he rules in humility overcoming difference by the same way; it is true in the breaking forth of his power, his Servants are mostly humble and Patient of necessity, because they have nothing to depend on but him; here many have been preserved that have fall'd when they have known any thing of an

overcoming, as tho the Lord was changed because the ſtate of things had changed them; No he is the ſame ſtill, and therefore no other way but to deny ſelf, and to throw down your Crowns at the feet of Jeſus; an hard thing indeed to fleſh and blood, but that's no matter, *fleſh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*, and as this was never known truly done in any Reformation, ſo it has certainly been the ground of Diviſion, or at leaſt a cauſe of it, and of that enmity that hath attended Seperation; and 'tis now become your Tryal; O that you could conſider of it that ſo the evil and enmity at leaſt in our different apprehenſion and diſſatisfaction might be avoided; pray conſider, more light may ſpring up, as it hath done before, and God may make uſe of whom he pleaſes without your leave; and you ought rather to wait for his judgment, then to conclude you are Judges of it, or of whom he ſends or makes uſe of; verily you cannot be too little in your own eyes, what ever you are in others, pray direct all to Chriſt, that he may be known by way of preheminence in all, the Elder of Elders, and be content to leave all with him, as in the beginning, with out ſetting limits to his appearance, of your own deviſing, knowing moſt certainly that none that come truly to him, can do any thing againſt the Truth, and they that do not ſo come can do nothing for it; and once for all, tho what is evil and Immoral may and ought to be rejected, yet conſidering what gives acceptance with God can not be Impoſed, let not a miſled Zeal, *on this ſpecious Pretence, to make the Church as large as the Profeſſion, or by adding of new Orders and Rules, under pretence to help ſuch as are not faithful*, be a cauſe to reject ſuch as are; for as you deal with ſuch as are Conſcientious, you will

be dealt with; and to be plain with you, if in this caſe you do not Judge your ſelves, you will be Judged by ſome that ſucceed, as truly as you have judged ſome that did go before; for if you would but honeſtly reflect upon your ſelves in that glaſs of equal Liberty, which you have held to others; *you might certainly ſee ſome thing of the ſame Image, that you have reproved in others.* And why ſhould you take this ill or think it hard or ſtrange, for you muſt come through thoſe Difficulties and Straits, where others have fail'd or you muſt miſcarry; but if you have not ſeen them it is certain you have not eſcaped them; then muſt you be as truly tryed, (as others have been) by them whom the Lord may ſend; you know what our Lord ſaid, *There are firſt that ſhall be laſt, and there are laſt that ſhall be firſt.* You know thoſe hired into the Vineyard *ſome came ſooner then others, but thoſe that came laſt be paid firſt*; this was not faulted whileſt thoſe that came firſt, did ſtill expect to receive according to their Eſtimate of their time and Service (as they ſaid) *in the heat of the day*, but when it proved otherwiſe, all was wrong with them, what was written, was *writ for our Learning*; therefore ſet Self but really aſide; and the Scripture will be found as true in our day as formerly. For to be plain, 'tis the overvaluing of your ſelves and [illegible] work, that makes the miſtake, but as I ſhould ſpeak to the intelligent, on this point ſhall not much further proceed at this time, but take notice, what is here ſaid, is not to depreſs any beneath their true vallue or raiſe any above it in the eyes of others, but only that confidence in the fleſh, wherein ſo many have ſtuck and miſcarried, might be waſted and conſumed, that ſo the Lord our God might be exalted over all, *for he that is come, is yet to come,*

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and of His goings forth hath been from Everlasting; they *still continue a Riddle to the Rulers, and a Mistery to all that is but born after the flesh*; and what is *flesh* in a Religious sense, but Form, the external part of Religion; for all that stick here, as they are great in the formality of it, so such never fail'd to persecute them thats *born after the Spirit*, because such being dead with Christ to the World, and the Rudiments of it, have not nor never had that value for *outward things*, which those *born after the flesh* have; yet *always brings forth the righteousness of those things*. It was thus betwixt *Israel* and the Prophets, and betwixt the *Jewish Rabbys* and our Lord, and hath been much after the same manner in the Reformation, and is after the like sort now, if you could but consider it; but for all this we can allow of Elders, and that in a good sense, for some have been before others in testifying to Gods appearance in our day, and have been made instrumental to turn some to righteousness in the hand of the Lord; but what then, did such find out the Truth by their skill or cunning, or the Lord sought them out, did such send themselves or the Lord sent such into his Vineyard? If the Lord, is not all owing to him? and cannot you be content with what honour he gives, without seeking honour by bearing witness of your selves, for the noise you make bears witness you are not satisfied with that honour he gives, *he that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom* and in the best sense you can be but Preparers for him, and as you have directed all to him you ought to be willing to present all to him, *for his increasing must be the decreasing of the Instrument*; for every true Preparer for Christ does certainly know as he comes to take the Government they must decrease, therefore

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do they constantly throw down their Crowns by affirming that their Service must be fulfilled to every one that comes to know the sufficiency of our Lords Government. And cannot you be glad and rejoyce in this? If not, all is not right yet; for all the true Preparers for him, as they know this, ought to be so, they both seek and desire it, but such as are so much in the formallity's of Form, they cannot, because they gather to themselves that is to *their own Opinions and Judgments*; grant that you have Preached to us Spiritual things; What then, do you desire we should know you after the flesh for that? If so, all is not yet right; if God have made some of you Instrumental to turn some to Righteousness, and in that sense may be termed as Fathers, do you expect our Obedience as Children? But if so, consider you are under as great or greater Obligation to us as Children, you should neither provoke nor require of us what we can not give for Conscience sake; for it would be cruel to seek to destroy what you might be Instrumental to beget; 'tis not a telling of us the cause of Difference is not matter of Conscience whilest we know, and do most surely believe otherwise; beware what you do for if by your distinctions of what's Civil and Religious, you destroy the tenderness of Conscience or reject such as are Conscientious, your Work must suffer loss by the fire, which must try your Works as well as others, and indeed it seems already kindled, the occasion of all this noise is for the saving of what is combustible; whereas had you builded nothing but Gold and Silver, had you insisted upon nothing but what had been Essentiall to Society and good Order, there would have been no occasion of this noise; because then there had been no fear or hazzard of loss; nay such things would have

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ſtood the tryal and com'd through rather purified then hurt.

But to proceed, is it not ſufficient for you that we can acknowledg your Seniority, as above expreſſed and can teſtifie that it was Truth you directed to in the beginning, but we muſt alway be under your Tutorage? is it not honour enough for you, that we can ſay *that having come to him with our hard Queſtions, whoſe Fame you ſpread, that we have found the truth of his ſufficiency even beyond your report; and now being come to him, and heard him our ſelves, would you have us back again to depend on you?* Nay verily, rather give us leave frankly to ſay, we believe not now *becauſe of your word, but becauſe we have heard him our ſelves, whoſe word is Spirit and life*, and by what he has done for us, we're ſure *he only* can compleat what remains; and if your diſtinction of greater or leſſer things were neceſſary (*Page* 15 and 16) we find he does not only teach the great things, which you ſeem to grant as our Duty towards God, but the leſſer things alſo, as our Duty toward Men, which you ſeem to reſerve; and what is this for, but that we might alway remains Pupils, that thereby we might be at your Devotion? but to be plain, if that diſtinction be needfull, we find he teacheth the leſſer things firſt, and greater and greater as we are fitted to receive them; for 'tis impoſſible we ſhould know the greater and not the leſs, or be faithful in the greater, and falſe in the leſs; *for he that performs his Duty to God cannot fail of paying what he owes to his Neighbour*; and indeed to know this Spiritual Birth, by which God can in a peculier ſenſe be truly called Father, is needful for every individual Soul; otherwiſe our Title and Intereſt is ſurer to this World and the

things

things of it, then it is to that which is to come, when that and the things of it, as it is more excellent so it can only be more sure, this being but the Figure, and that the Substance; give us leave to say then, where the sufficiency of Christ the Son of God is known, such cannot depend on you, nor any Man; and they that know not your Service fulfilled by him, knowes not yet his sufficiency, nor is Christ yet truly formed in them as they ought to know him: And truly every one that confesses that Christ is come in Spirit, and does not wait and hope to have your Service fulfilled as Instruments, they have either taken up a false Rest, or yet never came into the true travel. And whilst you seem to grant him the greater things and not the less, it is because you do not know the greater, or at least are not subject to the Government of Christ as you ought to be; bear with us for the knowledge of his sufficiency, and the necessity for every one [illegible]w it, that professes his teaching that confesses to his inward and Spiritual Appearance with love to him and those that so profess, makes us thus to speak, and constrains us thus to Judge, *that if one dyed for all then all was dead*, and he that you have directed to in the beginning, being *that one that dyed for all*, for this very end, *that such as are quickned and live by him, should not live to themselves, nor to you, nor any other by way of Dependance, but only to him*, that dyed for them and rose again, to Govern them so, that tho there may have been a time that we might depend on Men as hoping to receive from them, but this was in our Pupillage and Childish states, and as that must be passed through, or Spiritual Manhood cannot be known, so where Spiritual Manhood is truly known, such cannot know you nor any Men any more so,

or after that manner; Christ has been known after the flesh, but now as we are chiefly to know him after the Spirit, on this account therefore we are to know Men no otherwise; thus much by way of Preface.

And now we will come to the matter of Difference as you have stated it; (*Page* 2 and 3) *that there is a Difference* (you say,) *is but too plain, for 'tis come* (you say) *to a Seperation, as well to Places of worship, as in matters of Discipline*, &c.

Answer, This is well done to grant that those that have Separated have Places for Worship &c. For this fairly demonstrates, those did not Seperate to be at liberty in the flesh, as has been too commonly reported and objected; no, no, that was not the matter; Places for Worship shew such intend to serve God still, and Discipline denotes such intend still to take care of what business belongs to the Society; this we think might bring you nearer them then you are, if well considered, what you confess, [redacted] that *they'r one in Judgement with you in the Worship and Doctrines of Truth*, and therefore if you be true, we cannot see how they should be wrong, Consider of it.

But to Proceed: *The ground* say you *of this great Dissatisfaction upon which so great a distance has been raised* (*you say*) meaning those that are Dissatisfied) *is requiring your complyance with some practices relating to Discipline, particularly Womens Meetings, and coming twice before Men, and Womens Meetings about Marriages before admitted to be Solemnized among us, Some of you* (*that is dissatisfied*) *thinking that there's no Service for Womens Meetings at all, others no Service in their being distinct from Mens Meetings, at least no necessity for either, and therefore no necessary com-*

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plyance to be required, and insisted upon (by us) but every one left (in this matter should have been added) *to their Liberty in Christ, least Imposition and Formality should prevail among us, as they have done in other Religious Societies in this* (sayes the Author) *I think I have truly and fairly stated the case on your side (that is dissatisfied) and given your Objection to our Practice and the reason why you dissent from it*, &c.

Answer, Other things beside this have given occasion of dissatisfaction: For Instance *that Positive Limit of a Years time in the case of Marriage*, which certainly is of evil consequence, and against both truth and reason, as might be demonstrated. But this above being as the Original or first beginning of the present Dissatisfaction, *that and the rest may be included*; in the success of this, we may grant the Objection is better made then answered a great deal, but yet it is neither fairly nor truly stated at least in the first part; for you make the Objection [redacted] alike against Mens and Womens Meetings, and against coming twice to the Mens as well as against comming twice to the Womens; whereas you do very well know that the Objection does lie chiefly against *that* of the Women, and your imposing of it: and not against *that* of the Men, nor against coming twice before them, if occasion be for satisfaction; for you know speaking generally they did not refuse to come to the Mens Meetings in the case of Marriage, till you peremptorily *made that of the Womens as Essential or as necessary as the other*, and would not allow of the Former without the Latter, tho our *Antient Practise and Order mutually agreed on and established among us*: From hence came Dissatisfaction by Imposing those things, and thereby invading our Liberty as a free and Voluntary

Societie, and therefore if hence forward ſome refuſed to come to the *Mens Meetings* in the caſe of Marriage, it was becauſe you had inſoyned the Other with it, and this being wrong in their Judgement, at leaſt as Impoſed, it made the whole wrong, *for to injoyn what's wrong with what's right, ſo that the one cannot be done without the other, make the whole act wrong.* Now for you to Argue (as in the 7 *Page*) that ſuch refuſe to come to the *Mens Meetings* becauſe they will not ſatisfie Parents, nor clear former ingagements, is *diſingenious* and *unfair*; for you have both loſt the Objection, *to witt, Womens Meetings*, and alſo make it the ſame thing to deny *impoſition*, as it is to go from an *Antient Practice* allowed of by us, wherein you miſrepreſent the *honeſt Diſſenter* as well as abuſe the unthinking *Reader*, &c.

As to the latter part of the Objection 'tis more fair, we may take it beginning at thoſe words, *at leaſt no neceſſity for either*, that is, there is no *neceſſity* for *Women* Conſtant *Meeting* either by themſelves or with the Men for Government in our Church or Society. Now the Term *neceſſity* on which the weight of the Objection lyes or depends, you have not ſpoken to it, nor ſo much as taken notice of it in your Anſwer; therefore we may ſafely ſay the objection, tho of your own Stating, is abundantly better made then anſwered; but as the weight of the matter lyeth in this part, you ought to have taken it in; for you muſt grant there is *a neceſſity for Womens Meetings* as above, or *there is not*; if there is *a neceſſity for Womens Meeting* to be univerſally impoſed upon the *Society*, then you ought fairly to have ſet that out, for do that and truly demonſtrate or prove it, and then complyance will follow of courſe; this had been

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a ſhort and clear way to have done your buſineſs; but if no *neceſſity for Womens Meetings* as above, then you ought to have granted that, becauſe it is needfull to know on what foot you proceed with us; for if no neceſſity for *them*, and yet you inſiſt to require our Complyance, then the Iſſue and deciſion of this great Controverſie, muſt ſtand in the vallidity of your Authoritie, to require *things* to be done by us, for which in truth there is no *neceſſity* that *they* ſhould be done.

Obſerve, Either of theſe Points truly proved determins the controverſy, but both cannot be inſiſted on and as both cannot be pleaded, if you can prove neither; in plain terms you muſt be guilty of Impoſing and ſeeking *Lordſhip over your Brethren*, or ſomething that relates to it, which cannot agree with our Principle and that free bottom we ſeemed to Imbarke together in

Now we do moſt ſurely believe you can prove *neither* of the Points above, and might here give ſome reaſons for it, without taking any further notice of what you write; but leaſt you or any ſhould ſay we evade your Arguments becauſe we cannot Anſwer them, we will conſider them firſt; though truly they ſeem in our Judgment ſo far from proving any thing to the matter, that they appear more *Artificial* then *Genuine*, more like *drawing a Curtain* before the *work of Imagerie*, then fairly ſetting out the truth; or like ſuch as have bad Cauſes of Titles to manage; nothing is more dangerous then comming to the *Merrit of the Cauſe*, or truth in the matter, for what a good Cauſe in this caſe indeavours *in plainneſs and ſimplicitie*, the other endeavours to avoid *by Artifice and cunning*

But

But to Proceed, what you begin with is to clear your selves of *Imposition and Formalitie*, but could you have proved either of the Points there had been no Occasion of this, it follows (Page the 4.) *I do not find* (says our Author) *that you* (meaning those dissatisfied) *have any just cause to fear in general an infringement on our Christian Liberty. Since it has been and is most sincerely declared by the Brethren chiefly concern'd in the good Order and Service of the Church, that they have no thought or design of imposing any thing upon the Consciences of Friends or that friends, ought to have now any more then at the beginning any other reason or measure of compliance or conformity in matters relating to God than the conviction of the light and Spirit of God in every Conscience but there is this distinction to be considered well of, that the matters in difference are not such as require such an exercise and conviction of Conscience as is pleaded because they relate not to Faith or Worship, did they require Faith, or did they appertain to Worship, as if you were obliged to Worship God only in such Place, time, Gesture, Raiment, with such words and Forms of speech, &c. Your Plea and objection were good; but the about which your Dissatisfaction arises is merely Discipline in Government and not in Worship, Formalities in Order, not in Religion, it is about Methods of regulating our selves as to the Civil or outward of the Church, as we are a Society, &c. For instance, to keep the Necessitous, and reconcile Differences, in fine, to prevent rebuke, and restore disorderly Walkers.*

Ans. You see we have quoted you fairly, and shall as freely examine it without begging any excuse; for in matters of *Truth and Justice* all carnal consideration is to be set aside; on this account then we are to know

know no Man after the flesh, no not that of *Fathers or Elders*, and therefore first take notice, all this has nothing in it to prove *a necessity for Womens Meeting* constantly in the Society as above, nor that you under the Notion of Elders have any Power from God or the Society to bring in, and inforce upon Us that for which in truth there is no necessity; no, could you do that, you do but trifle and lose time by this discourse; but the truth of it is, this bespeaks you can prove neither of the Points; for you perswade us to follow you in those things, not because there is a necessity for them, or because you have Power to impose them upon us; but because they are not *matter of Conscience*; whereas if you had *Power* to bring them in or there was *a necessity* for them, then they must be *matter of Conscience*, and it would be our Duty to obey you; *for what is Duty is matter of Conscience*; you know we have been directed and exhorted *to walk in the light as God is in the light*, and that is always, but this we cannot do without *Conscience* and *understanding*; now if we must follow you without *understanding* and *Conscience*, we are to follow you *not in the Light but without it*, and then that must be in the dark, and you know 'tis writ *they that walk in the dark know not whither they go*; to be sure *if they get not into the Ditch they must be in danger of it*.

But to proceed, You tell us that *you find no cause for us to fear in the general an infringement of your Christian Liberty*, &c. If this was true in the *general*, yet just cause *in a particular case* was sufficient for our amendment, *for once admit of one error, and may be made for more*; you know 'tis a Proverb, *Rome was not built on a day*; nor did the most degenerate *Church* become so all at once; nay there's a time ordinarily to grow

worse

worſe as well as better, but your reaſon as we take it, that *we need not fear an Infringement on our Chriſtian Liberty* is this, that *the Brethren chiefly concerned in the good Order*, &c. *have moſt ſincerely declared they have no thoughts of impoſing upon Conſcience.* But pray who are thoſe Brethren, what muſt we ſuppoſe at adventure who they are, and then conclude they have not only *moſt ſincerely declared* as above, but alſo that they *cannot err or be miſtaken*? But in the firſt Place, if the matter be ſo purely *Civil* as you make it, why are not *thoſe Perſons* you ſpeak of, as civilly ſet forth, for otherwiſe we are to depend on *we know not whom*, and take for truth what we cannot underſtand, and what more *blind* and *Implicite*? And what other Medium is afforded whileſt neither the Brethren are ſet out, nor we allowed *Conſcience to know what men ſay is true*, for take notice, *there muſt be a certainty of thoſe things, or a liberty of choice.* But our Author is one of thoſe chiefly concern'd in *the good Order*, above or he is not, if not pray how does he know thoſe he ſpeaks of have *moſt ſincerely declared*? what does he preſume they have, and we muſt truſt him; and what's this but preſumption upon preſumption? But if he is one of them *chiefly concern'd* and ſo may pretend he ſpeaks by experience; what demonſtration does he give beyond his *ſay ſo*? but if we know him and could take his word for himſelf, what ſecurity can he give for the *reſt concerned*, that they have *moſt ſincerely declared* as before; but ſuppoſe they are ſincere and in earneſt, what ſatisfaction can either he or they give that they are not *miſtaken* in the matter? this is neither *Impertinent* nor *Unneceſſary*; for if we muſt be led without *underſtanding and Conſcience*, to know the truth

truth of things or be satisfied for our selves, we had need to have some satisfaction *of the sufficiency of those on whom we are to depend*, for *what blind Man would be willing to be led into a ditch?* so that tho he cannot see himselfe, yet would be as sure as possible those can, on whom he is to *depend*, and plainly whilst you neither set forth our *Leaders* that we may query them for our satisfaction, nor allow us *conscience* to know what Men say is true; you put us as much as in you lyes into a worse condition then those that's blind, *who yet have liberty to chuse for their satisfaction to the best of their understanding*; how can you think much that we desire to be satisfied when the Leaders and Elders in most Ages in your own sense, at one time or other *have been mistaken*, and by their mistake have caused the People to err, and yet might be sincere or in earnest; for you know the Apostle *Paul* bare the *Jews* witness, *they had a Zeal for God but not according to knowledge, and therefore being Ignorant of the Righteousness of God, went about to establish their own*; and if we consider there's nothing new what was then, hath been in all the Reformation & is still, and will continue, where *outward things are over valued, or Circumstantial things made terms of Communion*. So that there is no more said or done in all this, then what mistaken Men and degenerate Churches may have said or done.

But to Proceed, you tell us *that Friends ought not to have now any more then at the beginning, any other reason or measure of compliance or conformitie in matters relating to God, then the conviction of the light, and Spirit of Christ in every Conscience*, &c. *But* (say you) *there is this distinction to be considered well of, that the matters in difference are not such as require such an exercise and conviction as is pleaded, because they relate not to Faith or Worship*, &c.

Answer, We grant that a distinction may be made betwixt *what relates to God, and what relates to Man*, but to make

 this

this distinction in our case, on purpose to exclude *Conscience* in the latter, is so far from being *a right measure*, that it is really wrong, and not only wrong but dangerous on a Religious score, and not safe on a Civil. First on a Religious score, as this distinction makes serving God not to stand in all we do, it makes it but to stand in some things, and as this makes Gods Worship and Service not to be constant and continual, it makes Worship only to relate to times and Places; in the best sense this can but comport with a Legal Service and dispensation, for it cannot agree with what's truly *Gospel*, as rightly distinguished and understood from what is *Legal*, for speaking generally there is not never was but two *Covenants* or *States* in which men are truly and sensibly tyed to God, the first is *that* of fear, the other is *that* of Love; the first is *that* of a Servant, and is a Glorious State and has many advantages, but as it cannot perfect, it is not to continue, but is to give Place to the *latter*, this is *that* which as it is perfect so 'tis everlasting, the first State can speak much of his Masters greatness and Majestie in the manifesting of his Royal Pleasure at sundry times and on distinct Occasions; but as those appearances continue not, so this State is but a Servants, and doth not abide always in the house, therefore does not equally serve God at all times, but the Son's State abides allwayes in the House, and does allwayes what's pleasing in the sight of God, and does not serve him more at one time then another, as it relates to his Obedience; for tho' the Errand, he is sent about, may differ according to the Occasion; yet cannot be said to serve God more at one time then another because *his Love and Obedience is equal*.

Now to apply it: For you under the Notion of Elders to conceive, believe and teach as above, *that Gods worship, Honour and Service, stands but in some Acts, and but at some Times and Places*, as it must, if we do not serve God in things that

that may be termed Civil; tis true this sets up an Elder-ship by begetting *an Implicite* reverance to them; but it is dangerous and pernicious to the Souls of Men, for if once Men believe that *Gods worship stands but in some things, and but at some times*, it prevents the looking and hoping for *that Spiritual Worship*, Our Lord and Master taught, *which is neither at* Samaria's *Mountain nor in* Jerusalem *below but in Spirit and truth*, and that, we say is to be constant as well as every where; again to believe this distinction *that we are not to serve God alwayes and in all things*, this prevents the looking and hoping for the effect of *that Prayer* Our Lord taught his Disciples and us, as we become his Disciples, and that is, *thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as 'tis in Heaven*, and to be sure that is equal, constant, and continual.

Further, to teach that we are not to *serve God alwayes and in all things*, as it sets God at a distance so it prevents the looking for as well as the receiving of that blessed Union Our Lord and Saviour speaks of, and that is being *made perfect in one through him, by which God becomes all in all, seen, felt, tasted and praised in all we doe, what ever it is*; but believing *Gods Worship and Service stands but in some things, and but at some times*, as it certainly prevents the knowledge of what is above expressed, so it sets up *a false rest*, then which nothing is more pernitious and dangerous to the Souls of Men; we intreat you to consider of this Doctrine; for where the New Man is truly put on, all is made anew, not only the Heavens but the Earth also, and there all is done to the Praise of God to eating and drinking and every thing else.

But on a Civil account we look upon this distinction unsafe, for we know no Civil Government but that of *Caesar's*; therefore none amongst us, but what is Religious, and founded on Religious Principles, in which Faith and Conscience is to be truly concerned in all we doe; *For without Faith it is impossible to please God* (tho we may men;) and this

seems too much insisted on ;)we are to walk by faith and not by sight, *for 'tis the Just Man that lives by his faith*, and *if he lives by it, he cannot be without Faith in any act and live to God* ; Pray mind that; for Faith is as needful to our Souls in the living to God, as the Air is to our Natural Bodies, for the living in this World. As for your instances of those things *that do not relate to God, Faith, Conscience, and Religion*, that is, *keeping the Necessitous, rebuking and restoreing disorderly Walkers*, &c. We say those things are Acts of Religion and Conscience, or the Apostle *James* was out, (1*st*. *Ch*: 27 *vers*) and cannot be done acceptably to God *without Faith and Conscience*, (tho they may without Womens distinct and constant Meeting for Government) for if those Acts above could be done rightly *without Faith*, what hindred the *Pharises* acceptance? For who did them better then they in the outward appearance? But as our Righteousness is to exceed theirs, so if those outward acts be done better by us then them, they must be done in the Faith, in the sense of Gods Presence and Power, *that works both the will and deed that's done to his Praise*; and this all Formalists as well as the *Pharises* wanted to do them in, and they must needs want that Faith, that gives acceptance with God, who conclude *those things are not acts of Religion and Conscience*.

But to distinguish things into Civil and Religious, for this purpose, that we might perform, what you are pleased to call Civil, without taking notice of Conscience, which being directly to please and humour you in your Opinions and Judgements, what is clearer, then that the Form you are setting up and striving for, to the loss of Charity, and good will, is really to be and is *a Form without Power*? Seeing according to your distinction it may very easily be performed without Faith and Conscience. On this account pray consider, if you may not as justly be withstood or turned from, as those

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the Apoſtle ſpeaks of; We intreat you to be ſerious in this matter, while Balm in *Gilead* may be had to heal our wounds and bruiſes, that is, to cure our Diviſions and remove our Diſſatisfaction. But further, (You ſay, *did thoſe things* (of difference) *require Faith, or did they appertain to Worſhip as if you were obliged to Worſhip God only in ſome Place, Time, Geſture, Raiment, with ſuch Words, or Forms of ſpeech*, &c. *your Plea and Objection was good* (*page* 4)

Anſwer, True Worſhip cannot be impoſed, for 'tis a ſerving God according to his mind, in which Mans preſcriptions have no place, becauſe ſuch the Father only ſeeks out to ſerve him, and it appears that Goſpel Worſhip ought to be conſtant, *for ſuch as are Joyned unto the Lord are one Spirit*, and they that deny a conſtant Serving and Worſhiping of God, it is becauſe they do not know this Union of being *Joyned unto the Lord in one Spirit*; how ever the worſhip you mean and intend is conſtant or it is not, (for we would by no means miſtake you;) if not conſtant, it relates to our Publick Aſſemblies only, and ſo to Preaching and Praying and ſuch other Publick acts as is done and performed at thoſe certain times and Places, and becauſe thoſe things that is the preſent occaſion of difference in a ſtrict ſenſe, do not relate to thoſe Publick acts for Worſhip in our Aſſemblies, therefore in your ſenſe there can be no Impoſition upon Conſcience, by Impoſing thoſe things; but then pray obſerve what follows and that is, *that there is no ſerving of God but in our Publick Aſſemblies*, nor (if you pleaſe) *uſe of Conſcience, but when ſo met together*; On this account, Pray why do you refuſe to put off your Hats, to uſe the word *you* to a ſingle Perſon, to pay Tithes and ſeveral ſorts of Taxes for according to this Notion of Worſhip and Service thoſe things are Civil and not Religious; we do not mention thoſe things as indifferent; but to ſhew, how by indeavouring to avoid one error you run into another.

But

But if we are to Worſhip and Serve God conſtantly, as we ſay we are, we ought to wait to know and be ſenſible of him every where, and upon all occaſions; but we ſay this cannot be done without Faith, for without Faith we cannot be ſenſible of his Preſence as the Governour of our actions, nor can our deeds be done or wrought in him without it; well then if we are thus to ſerve God, and this cannot be done without Faith, then we ſay, if the thing you contend for was really good, we muſt, if we ſerve God, firſt know them to be good; thus on this foot in your own ſenſe our Plea and Objection is good, becauſe the Thing in Difference relates to the Service of God.

You explode in other Societies the impoſing Time, Geſture and Raiment, in the Worſhip of God, but pray conſider if you are not doing ſomething of the ſame Nature; for you muſt grant that the Worſhip and Service of God ought to be conſtant or it ought not; if it ought not to be conſtant, you ty it to ſome certain times and Places, and herein agree with thoſe you reprehend; but if you allow it conſtant, the impoſition of new things under this Notion of Civil is out of doors; But further this Form that you'r Impoſing with all the reaſon and force you have, is *that* to a Society, *that* a Garment is to particular Perſons; it is true and as truly granted without any reſerve, that what is ſimple is needful in both caſes; for we can not be well without a Garment whileſt cloathed with thoſe Houſes of Clay, neither as we are particular Perſons, nor as a Religious Society; but ſuperfluity is dangerous on both hands; for if ever the mind get out to think and conclude that it deſerves honour and reſpect, for the Garment, for the Form's ſake in comes thoſe additions of ſuperfluity; from hence on a Religious ſcore comes in Opinion and Ceremony, and this to make it more Glorious and Beautiful; that it may have more reſpect and acceptance both with God and Man; and thus

both

both on a Religious ſcore as well as on a Civil *Men grow proud of that which ſhews their Poverty, and rich in conceit by truſting in that which at the ſame time demonſtrates their want*; did they underſtand or rightly conſider of things; *for as clothing to our bodies ſhews our want and not our perfection, even ſo do Forms in Religion ſhew our fall and want*; and therefore the more we ſeem to need and are burthened with Ceremony, the more our want and miſery appears, if we could but ſee it. For this cauſe where this is truly ſeen and conſidered, ſuch content themſelves with what is ſimply needful, knowing *by how much as they ſtand in need of little by ſo much they come nearer their firſt being*; and then ſuch in ſtead of adding of Opinion and Ceremony to perfect them, do wait to have ſuch things fulfill'd as much as may be for Righteouſneſs ſake; on this account we way ſafely ſay *the leſs Ceremony the more truth*, and the leſs noiſe about the Formality of Form, the more hopes ſuch wait for the knowledge of God in Chriſt, which *is life Eternal*; but to apply the matter, the difference you make with us is not about what is ſimply needful to Society, for you grant *we are one in judgment with you in the Worſhip and Doctrines of truth, and owns both the end and means of good Order*, (*Page* 11) then pray conſider, If it be not hard for you to differ with Us about that which neither relates to the Worſhip nor Doctrines of Truth.

In ſhort, generally ſpeaking, you have allowed us formerly as true Worſhipers of God without *this new Mode or Faſhion* and you do ſo ſtill, or you do not; if you do, by what rule can you in the leaſt exclude us your Communion in thought word or deed? But if you do not allow us to be true Worſhipers of God and Members of the Society, without we put on this new Mode and Faſhion, that you are contending for what is more apparent and clear, then that it is the Raiment or (which is worſe) the Faſhion of it that is brought in as Terms of Communion and thereby Im-

Impoſed for us to Worſhip Godin, if we will be of your Society? Look to it, for while you are thus buthened about Ceremony or about the Formallity of Form, the interpretation of what is writing uponthis wall of Seperation that you make, will be, that you areweighed in the Ballance and *found wanting*.

Page 6. *You ſay to expect complyance of Members of a Society to ſuch Methods of Order as the Elders thereof have exhorted to and the generallity of the People have imbraced, and which the Major part of thoſe that Diſſent, declare they Diſſent from, more for fear of ſuffering an infringement of their Chriſtian Liberty then on diſlike of the matter it ſelfe, this (you ſay) cannot be call'd Impoſition upon Conſcience becauſe expedients of Order*, &c.

Anſwer, That thoſe things concern Conſcience we have ſhewed before; 'tis true you are ſpecious here, but it will not doſ for if it were true that the generallity imbraced the Order you have exhorted to, which yet is a queſtion, if we conſider it as doing it freely, but if they have that is little ſfor the greateſt Number in moſt Ages, and that in your own ſenſe have through intereſt or an Implicite dependance upon their Leaders and Elders, been led and perſwaded to their own hurt; again if it were true that the Major part diſſent more for fear of an infringment of their Chriſtian-Liberty then on diſlike of the matter it ſelfe, (which we truly queſtion as worded,) yet ſtill their plea is good by what name ſo ever they call their liberty, for if your diſtinction of Civil and Religious would hold, which we cannot allow in our caſe, for our reaſons above, yet if it would hold, here's all the difference; we have now a right as Men as well as Chriſtians; and ought no more to be impoſed upon by you on a Civil then on a Religious ſcore, you know thoſe that command a Lawful thing to be done that have no legal right to Command it; as it is wrong in thoſe that Command, 'tis wrong in thoſe that obey, the firſt invade true Liberty the other

other betray it, ſo that if the thing was good you ought to have a right Power to Command, but in our coming forth we inveſted no Man with Power to diſpoſe of us either in Civil or Religious; if we did, Set forth your Authority, for till that is done we conclude you do wrong, and tho from Religious you turn it to Civil; you'r ſtill no better for Engliſh Government beſt ſuits Engliſh Spirits, and the Lawes of *England* by which the Free Men thereof are governed are not made without their conſent, which is enough if but truly applyed to ſpoil this ſpecious pretence.

Page the 7. *But you that are Diſſatisfyed Object why muſt we go before Women, and why Women apart from Men? This ſtill Friends, can be no Impoſition, as is before expreſſed, becauſe it is no matter of Faith nor Practice of Worſhip; but a referring ſtill to our External Order of Life.*

Anſwer. This being as new as any thing to the Objection you have made, for thoſe that are diſſatisfied in *Page* 3. we may reaſonably expect that the ſtrength of your reaſon will be laid out upon it. We deſire you to conſider it, to is our Author ſayes *ſtill this can be no Impoſition upon Conſcience as before expreſſed*, but why we pray? *Becauſe* ſayes he, *it is not matter of Faith, nor practice of Worſhip, but a referring ſtill to our External Order*, that is, ſuch an Order and Form as may be ſet up without Faith, and practiſed without Conſcience; for obſerve here is ſtill nothing brought to prove a neceſſity for the thing, nor that you as Elders have any power to bring any thing in againſt the mind of your Brethren, for which there is no neceſſity; as to that of Faith, we have ſpoken to it before and therefore in ſhort if we muſt receive thoſe things you exhort to without Faith, it muſt be to pleaſe Men and not God; what is new in this Argument is your inſtance, *that the common Banns of Marriage exclude not Women from having their exceptions.* Very well, not do we exclude them where they

are concern'd; but what is this to prove a necessity for *Women distinct Meeting for Government in the Society?* Nothing surely; Women are concern'd in their own Marriages, and sometimes publickly in particular cases; and what then, therefore they must be so far concern'd in the Publick Administration of our Church or State Government, as if we could neither have Discipline nor Society without their constant and distinct Meeting to uphold us? what's this, but by a particular Case or Act, to prove in general a necessity for them to be Church or State Rulers? We will not say the Argument is fallacious but we may safely say 'tis frivolous.

But again, *Why Women apart say you* (that are dissatisfied? To which our Author answers (and indeed 'tis well worth observing considering the weight that lyes upon it, much of the difference depending upon this modification, and he is so far from leaving out any thing that may contribute to fortifie this Point, that he tells us his thoughts and all) *We think* (says the Author (and you think with him by the approbation of his thoughts) *for a very good reason* (well pray mind this good reason, nay this very good one if you can believe it on second thoughts) *Well* (says the Author) *the Church increaseth* and what then? *This* (says he) *increaseth the business*, and is this all that we might so justly expect to acquit you of Formality and Imposition? Indeed this is a poor sorry business to convince us, that there is a necessity for Womens distinct and constant Meeting for Government, in our Society, whether you'l inforce it under the Notion of Civil or Religious, whilest the whole body of Christians never yet increast so much as to find that Method Serviceable, much less a necessity for it.

But to make the most we can of this *very good reason*, by following it as far as it is good for any thing; suppose then there might be such an increase of Friends in some Places, as

might

might possibly constitute a necessity for Womens Meetings, yet where no such increase is, there is nothing to do for this *very good reason*; therefore to set up Womens Meetings universally is wrong, because it is set up not with respect to the increase for Service, but the formality of the thing; for in this (Page 6) You tell us, *it is the end that allways constitutes the means*, and here you tell us, *that the increase makes the business*; and as business is that end, therefore on those terms, where there is no increase, there is no business, and where no business no end, and where no end there need no means; and 'tis certain in many Places there is no increase since the thing came in question, therefore as it is against the truth, so 'tis against *your very good reason* to impose them universally upon our Society; thus to impose them is a wrong, that you ought to avoid, both according to reason and truth.

But further, according to this reason that *the increase makes the Service*, a decrease takes it away; therefore where there is a decrease instead of an increase, as the Service is at an end, we hope you will give leave to lay them by, and we think you can hardly deny this; for as (in your sense) there is not *matter of Conscience*; Conscience you know cannot be pleaded to uphold them; and if the pretence of Service be a wanting, to what purpose are they indeavoured to be kept up, except for meer Formality? The endeavouring of Unity here being the Rock, on which all others have split; But in short, either your Elders, that have exhorted to this of Womens Meeting and have used your Authority with the People for the keeping them up till you have made these Rents, Divisions and Dissatisfaction, did believe and judge that Friends was faithful to God without Womens Meeting, that is before they had them, or that they was not; if they was not faithful to God, did you think the setting up Womens Meetings for

Government in the Society would doe the buſineſs? What do you ſay. Did you think they would keep out the Devil or baffle the Serpent? Indeed if that was true, things is much altered ſince the beginning. But if you did believe that Friends was faithful, how could you imagine they would not receive what was needful without force? Pray conſider *is not our Principle univerſall? And is not the Spirit of truth ſufficient to lead into all truth?* Then muſt not every Man, at leaſt every Meeting know beſt what was Serviceable for them, or what they ought to do? If ſo, what need we pray of more then recommendation? Except you were afraid the Spirit of Truth would not lead into this Practice, and why? Except you know it was not a truth, and if not a truth, will you differ with us for things that ought not be obſerved as a truth? Pray Conſider of it.

Page the 8. and 9) You are pleaſed to tell us of the great benefits of Women diſtinct Meeting for Government, *For* (ſay you *to confirm it*) *two buſineſſes is doing at the ſame time, which* (ſay you) *in Country Places and Winter Seaſons where Friends come* 10 *or* 15 *Miles to a Meeting muſt needs be very convenient and comfortable*, &c.

Anſwer, Indeed You are hard beſet to keep up the credit of your Opinion, while ſuch Lame Notions are given for reaſons; for this makes Womens Meetings Serviceable, where either they cannot be Practiſed, or to be ſure, are leaſt uſed; for here you give *ſhort dayes and Winter Seaſon*, to make them the more Servicable, ſo that long dayes and Summer Seaſons have the leſs occaſion for them; and yet every body knowes they are then moſt frequent. And again, as you make their greateſt Service to be in Country Places, where Friends come ten or 15 Miles to a Meeting, they ſeem clearly to be of leaſt uſe in the City, if at all Serviceable there; becauſe Friends live near together, ſo may

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take time to do that buſineſs they cannot in the Country; when truly had not the good Women in the City found either more Service for their Meeting or leſs buſineſs of their own we believe we ſhould never have been preſſed with Womens Meeting in the Country to our diſſatisfaction; but by how much Friends live farther off one another by this rule Womens Meetinngs ſtill are the more Serviceable, for the farther off one another, the leſs time to meet together, and ſo ſtand the more need of quicker diſpatch; but all this proves Womens Meeting a very ordinary buſineſs, for where Friends live near together, they may very well excuſe the Women, becauſe they may take time to diſpatch their buſineſs themſelves; and then where they live remote they may as well excuſe them, by reaſon of the inconvenience of getting to go; ſo that you ſee all this noiſe, according to this reaſon, is about litle or nothing. But pray is not this reaſon at a litle ods with your *Very good reaſon* befor? For there you made the increaſe of Friends to great Numbers to make the Service, and here the fewneſs; for the remoteneſs does demonſtrate there's but few; but pray before you go further then 15 Miles for a Womans Meeting, is the thing practicable you have already ſet on foot? What 15 Miles to a Meeting for Women and home again in Winter ſeaſon and ſhort dayes! to which we may add, bad Wayes, long Miles and bad Weather, for you have made no proviſion nor exception that we know of; what think you of it on ſecond thoughts? You know you have told the good Women *the matter does not relate to God, nor is matter of Conſcience*, ſo we hope you will allow them the uſe of their reaſon, for if they find all the buſineſs they can do and goe 15 Miles to a Meeting in ſhort dayes as above, is not worth while, or that they can do all that buſineſs, if any better in their reſpective Meetings, and perhaps with leſs Charge, then this 15 Miles Journey would put them to; and beſides

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ſave themſelves at home, where they may be ſure they have an incumbent Duty, will not you be content? What do you ſay? If not, pray may not we juſtly and honeſtly inquire if ſuch as injoyne this 15 Miles Journey do themſelves put it in practiſe? If anſwered, that perhaps ſuch as injoyn it do not live ſo remote, and therefore have not occaſion to make the tryal; then may we not ſtill inquire who are beſt Judges of fact, thoſe that do not put in practice or them that have? But what think you of it, was not this Order made in ſome warmer Climate or at leaſt for ſome that dwelt where Dayes are more equal, Wayes better, and Miles not ſo long, as in many parts of *England*? But indeed too much of this, if it had not been to ſhew the frivolouſneſs of your reaſon) and therein the meanneſs of the cauſe that you have cauſed contention about.

Page the 9 you tell us *thoſe are your reaſons and Motives to the preſent Practice of Womens Meeting in the Church of Chriſt without compelling Conſcience or infringing Chriſtian Liberty*, &c.

Anſwer, We have conſidered the weight yeſt of your reaſons that we could find as above, and do not ſee any thing that is offered that can clear you of *either*; for here is not one word brought that proves a neceſſity for the thing you have introduc'd, and inſiſted upon to Diſatisfaction; or that you have power as Elders rightly to bring into the Society againſt your Brethrens mind, that which in truth there is no neceſſity for. Could you prove either of thoſe Points (as before) then it muſt be our Duty to obey and follow you; but not being ſo brought in; as it cannot be our Duty to obey, it can be no leſs in you then Impoſition and Formality by which you indeavour, (whether you conſider it or not) both *to compel Conſcience and infringe Chriſtian Liberty*.

Pag

Page the 9. our Author proceeds to tell us his own ſenſe, by this it appears he told us the ſenſe of others before, at leaſt the ſenſe of others as well as his own; which makes our application to ſuch no leſs forceible; *it follows* ſayes my Author, *my own ſenſe upon the whole matter*, (of difference, for that muſt be intended) *is a miſaprehending of the Brethrens intentions and an undiſtinguiſhing Zeal againſt Impoſition on the one hand*, (that is on the ſide of thoſe diſſatisfied) *and a fear on the other ſide* (that is on the ſide of the Elders) *that thoſe who ſo miſtook and miſrendred the deſign of the Brethren, were either high minded and unruly, or prone to indue liberty or that they not being the firſt promoters of this Diſcipline*, (to wit Womens Meeting for Government) *deſerted from thoſe that were, and ſo would leſſen the credit of their endeavours*, &c. *I ſay* (ſayes the Author) *my ſenſe is that this on each ſide gave riſe to the Diviſion*, &c.

Anſwer, We muſt confeſs this is pretty modeſt of a Party concerned and deſire you may weigh it, for wee'l conſider it a little; firſt as to *undiſtinguiſhing Zeal againſt Impoſition*, by this and ſome other paſſages in this Book it appears you allow of ſome kind of Impoſition, therefore as you are the Impoſers, it had been your part to have diſtinguiſhed the matter before you had Impoſed upon your Brethren; that ſo if poſſible all this trouble might have been avoided; but notwithſtanding that you ſeem to attempt ſomething about it, now when a great deal too late, yet we do not find it well done ſtill; 'tis true you tell us, *we are not to be impoſed upon on a Religious ſcore, nor in things that relate to God*; therefore if as Brethren, we had been conſulted that we might have agreed, if poſſible, about fixing the bounds of what's Religious and what relates to God; the difference now had been in a leſs compaſs; but you have been far from this Brotherly way, whileſt as

Elders

Elders you have not consulted Us as Brethren, not as Members of that Society, *that confesses but one Lord and one head*; nay rather have not you treated us either not as Brethren or at best but as Minors, that know not our right hand from our left, having no skill in the things that relate to God, nor what is Religious, as neither knowing Conscience nor who is Lord thereof? And doth not all this appear by the determining the matter without our knowledge approbation or consent? And have not you here directly trode the steps of a wrong imposing Church according to your distinction *in addresi to Protestants* Page 144, where you say, *an Imposing Church bears witness of her self she will be both Party and Judge*, &c. And is not this directly your State? For as Parties, have not you introduced your Opinions? And as Judges have not you determined the matter against us? We intreat you to weigh the matter seriously, for if this was wrong and evil in others, it cannot be good or right in you; for by how much as our comming together, as a Society, is more voluntary and free then any other People, that we know of on a Religious score, by so much is the point more tender, and therefore any thing of unjust Imposition more evil.

2*dly*. As to our *misapprehending the Brethrens intention in that case*: We believe we have not misapprehended them at all; however shall be as Charitable as we can in the explaining of our selves; therefore we say the Brethren might intend well, to wit, the credit of the Society and that others might be gathered over to our Form. Yet all this does not prove but they was mistaken in the means used to do it; for 'tis without doubt that the builders of *Babel* (a Figure of all the mistaken Builders on a Religious score) intended no less then the credit and preservation of their Societies, and to make their Mountain the gate to Heaven, that others might be obliged to come by them away; the

Pharisees

Pharises was as solicitous in the like case and we believe there has been the same care and pretenses in all the Reformations. And conclude that you as well as we, judge that all those was wrong, and mistaken, and that their mistake was chiefly *Ignorance of Gods power and righteousnes, as well as of his nearness*, and therefore in stead of waiting for Gods power to preserve and his righteousnes to adorn them, they indeavoured it by their own that could never answer the end designed, and truly we believe you are under the like mistake, how strange soever things may appear to you, 'tis certainly the acting of your own Spirit in the likeness of truth, that hath deceived you; we would not have you angry, for there's no occasion to be surprised, since you know beforehand we are Disatisfyed, and therein do oppose you; now we must oppose you either as believing you right or wrong; in this of Imposition; if you should conclude that we oppose you as believing you are right you make us really Judges, and as this will offer violence to our understanding we must of necessity (we can not avoid it but) know you are mistaken and do really want Charity, this must cast off all accommodation; for on this account the difference would be made on your part, as great as betwixt Christ and *Belial* or light and darkness; therefore to prevent your [illegible] this gulph all we can, and yet without any flattering we must say, We do oppose you as really believing you are wrong; Now that wrong must be managed by design, or through some mistake, if we should conclude it really by design you might perhaps, (and that truly) conclude us uncharitable on the other hand, (and two extreams can never meet) therefore we do place the wrong you do on a mistake (as above) for we can believe you might intend well, to wit, the credit of the Society; but we see those additions you use, as means, cannot do it, nor lyes it in your power by any additions, that you can make use of, to preserve the Name. The Name *Quaker* will

loſe its Luſtre and Beauty as well as other Names, *for the glory of all fleſh is but as the Flower of the Field*, that the gathering may be ſtill more Spiritual as well as more univerſal, for *'tis only they that doe Righteouſly that is Righteous*, *and 'tis only thoſe that fear God and workes righteouſneſs that are accepted of him*, and ſuch he accepts every where; and he accepts none elſe amongſt us, nor have we this righteouſneſs as we are of this Form, Society or Name, *but as we fear and love God*, ſo that if you cannot raiſe up this fear and love by which that Righteouſneſs is wrought, that gives acceptance, you can do litle except weary and burthen your ſelves in the inventing of New Orders, that way indeed you may become a Sect as a Nation that warreth againſt other Nations, but hereby you'l miſs the *true Unity*, *that ſtands in the Spirit of Righteouſneſs*; by ſeeking it and placing it in the formallity of Form.

3dly, But our Author makes the cauſe of difference on the other ſide (that on the ſide of the Elders) to *be their fear*, *that ſuch as did oppoſe*, *did it becauſe they are high minded*, *or unruly or for undue liberty or becauſe not Parties conven'd* &c. (as before.

Anſwer, It ſeems there was no Fence for your fear, you were afraid but you did not know of what, we grant thoſe that are afraid in the dark may have ſtrange apprehenſions and if in that fear they proceed to judgment and go about to provide for their ſecurity, they may well err in the one and miſaply the other, why? Becauſe they'r in the dark, that is in donbt and want Patiene to ſtay till the light come, *that makes things manifeſt as they are*, and truly this appears to be your condition with your Brethren; which have been occaſion of ſo much trouble and ſtrife, and why ſhould this be taken ill, or thought hard? You know thoſe that are in fear as you were muſt needs be in doubt, and thoſe in doubt are really in the dark, and if in that doubt or darkneſs they proceed to Judgment they muſt needs err, all this is clear to us on your part, for you

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did not know the true cause of your Brethren's Disatisfaction and opposing you, and therefore tho you Imagined many causes (as above) you still miss'd its now had you been certain, you could not have been in fear, for that is doubtful; 'tis true the case might have been such as you might have been troubled, but you was in fear and in that fear did go about to preserve your selves, and here was the mischief of the mistake, those that took this great fright had power to Intrest the Major part (the body as its call'd) in their security under the most specious pretence *that particulars [illegible] must be accountable to the Society.* Which tho true in many cases, yet is false in some, and that is, when it truly concerns the Lord, and here all or most Societies have err'd, and your Plea is now no more then an old Artifice of the Enemy, by which just and Conscientious Men have been made sufferers, in most Ages, as well as in Ours, here was the beginning of our mischief and misery, and the cause of it continues; for those of whom you were afraid must need be clothed according to your fear, and what follows whether your Judgement was right or wrong 'tis all one, they must suffer as evil doers by being kill'd and destroy'd in the minds and desires of the unthinking; few Synods and Councils of Men on this account but they have err'd; but as easily as they have been mistaken, it has been as hard to retrieve the wrong, nay on this score have they not rather been tempted to seek out shifts and evasions to cover a fault, then confess a failing? If it be inquired who is thus concerned in our case? The *Answer* is ready, but in stead of exposing Names, we could desire such might compare their mistake on this foot, with what hath happen'd even through most Ages, and so consider what they have done and do so no more, but in stead thereof make use of their power to make those things *indifferent*, that have given occasion by being *Positive*; and then we could easily pass all by and love freely; for truly

as much has been forgiven, we can forgive much, and what hazard in all this? when you say *thoſe things relate not to God*? And truly *you'r far from becoming all things to all while you cannot diſpenſe with your own Opinions.*

Page the 10*th* Our Author tells us *our difference now is more in Spirit then in fact, in mind more then matter*, &c.

Anſwer, Seing Our Author makes this difference ſo litle as to matter of fact, as not to amount to matter of Conſcience, we hope in time you will ſee it your Place to take it away by making your Opinion indifferent; that ſo in ſtead of falling out by the way, we might quietly travel together for the *true reſt.*

But to proceed, *It is* (our Author ſayes), *come to this*, whether *Converſation ſhould belong to Women as well as Men* and over this he thinks we are gotten for the moſt part, it ſeems then we are gotten a little nearer together then we were in his Judgment, and if any miſtake is removed 'tis very well; but pray who ever denyed Womens Concern in converſation as well as Men? They was alwayes concern'd in their own and ſuch as was under their charge, we were allwayes of this mind, and to this the Apoſtle agrees where he wills *the Younger Widdowes to Marry and govern the Houſe*, &c.

And if he took this care for the Un-married, ſurely he did nor forget thoſe that were; but what then? Tho the care of Converſation belongs to them, muſt they every way be as publickly concern'd as Men? What will nothing do but noiſe and Popularitie? Muſt not Men meet but Women muſt meet and at the ſame time, but yet muſt be diſtinct and ſeperate from the Men, tho' but divided by a Curtain in the ſame Room? And is not the Mode of Diviſion moſt of the matter? Muſt they indeed be as far concern'd as the Men? Muſt nothing be done without their conſent and approbation? Nay ſure, for we find the Apoſtle checking this

Popu-

Popularity and affected Government, when he forbids *Women speaking in the Church*, but this he did not unto Men which makes some difference; and if he forbids *Women speaking in the Church*, certainly he never thought of either making a Church or Church rulers of them; you'l say this prohibition did not exclude Women in all cases; we say so too; but then it must in a general sense, or you make the Apostle in a matter he seemed so earnest about to speak to no purpose.

2*ly*. Our Author asketh, *whether Women may not meet seperate from Men?* And for answer to this he sayes, *be pleased to take notice of your unavoidable concession you (that are dissatisfyed) allow meeting of care in general, and do not absolutely deny Women their share amongst the Men*, &c.

Ans. All this is right in the sense we take it, but pray who ever denyed honest Women to meet apart and distinct from Men on occasion? What need of all this, except to make it better appear how far we agree, that so a juster estimate may be taken of our difference? If so, all is well still, therefore consider the difference, we say *they may meett* on occasion seperate from Men, but you say *they must meet and that constantly for Government*, whether there be occasion for it, or no, tho they go 15 Miles to a Meeting in Winter seasons; what's this but to make busines rather then want it? And indeed to make a great noise about those very things that the more we are concern'd for the more our want and nakedness appear? For what does all this noise, but declare that we do not possess what we profess, and are not faithful to our own convictions.

But to proceed, our Author sayes to those that are dissatisfied, *You own the end*; what's that? *you (that are dissatisfied) own that the Poor and other things that are essential to Society should be taken care for*, that is right, but again sayes our Author *you allow of the means too*; What's that? *Well that must*

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be

by ſuch fitting Methods as may anſwer that end the buſineſs above expreſſed or intended; well thus far we do agree, and it muſt be granted there is a fitting Method to anſwer the publick Buſines or neceſſities of our Society, without Impoſing conſtant diſtinct Womens Meetings for Government, or there is not; if not, let our Author affirm and prove it; for do that honeſtly and take the cauſe; but if there is a fitting Method to anſwer the Publick buſines of our Society without this unity in Formallity contended for, why do you differ with Us, except it be for maſterſhip? And if that be it, be plain with us, and ſo end the Diſpute.

But again our Author ſayes, *You referr the choiſe of your means to the Society, and you as well as we expect a complyance with thoſe Rules*, &c.

Anſ. Hold a little; for 'tis too much to grant this by whole ſail as little as it is, therefore we will firſt enquire what is intended, for it is neceſſary to underſtand what we are to comply with, pray therefore obſerve who our Author ſpeaks to, for he ſpeaks in the Plural, *You* (ſayes he) *referr the choice of your means to the Society*, Pray who ſpeaks he to? Why, in this caſe he muſt needs ſpeak to thoſe Friends that are ſeperated for they having only diſtinct Meetings and Diſcipline, it is referrable to them or none; now if he ſpeaks to thoſe Friends, that is through diſatisfaction Seperated, then he muſt ſpeak to the whole Communitie, or but to a part; if he ſpeak but to a part of them, pray what part of thoſe that's ſeperated? This is neceſſary, for we ought to underſtand his meaning; but if he ſpeaks to the whole Communitie; then what is this Society, that thoſe that's ſeperated referr the choiſe of the means or Rules to for Diſcipline? For here's a Society in a Society, and this ſeems a miſtery; pray let this be unfoulded; for this Society in a Society ſeems ſome active buſineſs, 'tis ſet forth as the Soul to the body, pray how comes this Society? What is its [redacted]

[redacted]? Why, let it be what it will, God makes it, or Men, or otherwise it must make it self? It self it cannot make according to reason and truth, therefore if this Society makes it selfe, as its beginning must be Usurpation, its end will be Tyranny and Oppression, now if those you write to submit to any such Usurpation amongst themselves, whilest they deny it to you, pray prove it upon them; for do that and they will appear guilty of what they accuse you for; but if this Society be of Mans making, that is, that those that are seperated, have selected some from among themselves to govern them, in whom they have deposited a Power to make Rules and Lawes for them to which the whole is to be subject without examination, tho 'tis true in this it can not be said that others have inslaved them because it is their own choice, but if they have done thus, pray prove it upon them? For still they will in some part be guilty of that they accuse you of, there is only this difference, that those thus chosen may act rationally according to the Power lodged in them whilest you act without any such choice or assignation that we know of, the first indeed may be said to be rational, *but is it really Ignorance of the sufficiency of Christ to make any such choice and a dishonour to our Lord, as it takes away examination*, but to have any to Impose themselves upon us is slavery to boot.

Lastly, But if this Society is of our Lords making, then they must act according to the description of Government our Lord has given and advised to in his Disciples, where he tells us, *he that rules should be as him that serves, and he that would be greatest in his Government must be Servant to all the rest*, then not as Lords and Masters to Impose upon the rest, for as *his Kingdom is not of this world, no more is his Government like the government of this world*, for that stands in force and mostly in subtilty and contrivance, but he takes his Kingdom and Government in the hearts of Men by convictions

victions and perswasions only, which is diametrically contrary to wrath subtilty, force and violence.

But to Apply what is said to our case; as we are a publick Society, there is business belongs to Us, this must be done by some body, and for that end 'tis needful to have time and place appointed that such as are willing to serve their Brethren and Friends may meet; and because all cannot meet, such as do, are allowed to act according to those Rules the Society have imbrac'd, and if any thing farther seems needful to them, such have liberty, as the rest of their Brethren have, and not otherwise, to recommend it, but cannot Command; for as we are a free and voluntary Society *confessing but one head and Lord*, the liberty of examination, must be preserved, as well that we may continue a free People, as also and chiefly that we may conserve that *honour due unto the Lord*, and where according to the truth and our constitution examination ought to be preserved, a choice must be allowed, so that on this foot recommendation is the highest any Man or any Assembly among us can go in the adding of new things, nor will or can such as have the mind of Christ desire more; therefore if what such recommend meet with acceptance, all is well; but if not, all is well still to such as meet to serve their Friends and Brethren, and not to be their Lords and Masters. now those that have separated from you on the account of Imposition writes after this Coppy, which our Lord and Master hath set, they will never differ at an Eldership not mastership, and truly had you given this good example of self denyal, *we could have given you double Honour*, for we are for good Order, tho against Mastership, and for good Government but against Arbitrary proceedings; nor let any think we cannot have good Order and Government so far as its necessary without a despotick Power be lodged in some to rule over us, nay the Civil Constitution of our own Nation demonstrates the contrary, for it allows of Or-

der and Government but denys *Arbitrary* Power, and [illegible] Civil there has been this ſenſe of Freedom to provide againſt Lordſhip and Dominion how much more ought we to avoid it in Religion? *where Chriſt our Lord is to be our Example*, that overcame by ſuffering, *and through Death deſtroyed him that had the Power of Death.*

But again *Page* 11 Our Author ſayes *The Queſtion is whether in fact Womens Meetings be part of that Diſcipline the Church admits of*, and to this the Author ſayes, *'tis evident the Church of God generally ſpeaking receives and Practices it.*

Anſ. This is litle to conclude us, when 'tis conſidered that the greateſt part of all Churches through all Ages, and that in your own ſenſe, at laſt have been wrong and miſtaken. But to the matter, if we take *the Church of God* in a general ſenſe (according to Addreſs to *Proteſtants Page* 154) we may ſafely ſay ſhe neither receives nor practices Womens Meeting for Diſcipline, but we take it he means Friends; and if not too much to apply the term only to them; then we ſay, the contrary ſaying muſt be as true as this and of as much force to determine the matter againſt you, *the Church of God generally-ſpeaking* (ſayes our Author) *receives and Practices Womens Meetings*; what then? But not ſpeaking generally doth neither receive nor practice them; in our Authors ſenſe both parts make the Church, tho not receiving this of Womens meetings by the leſſer part hinders not them from being of the Church, and we are ſure the practiſing of them by the greater part can make them no more; then who is this that dare for [illegible] *mere Opinion ſake* divide by force and voilence what God hath Joyned together? You know what Chriſt our Lord ſaid that *there ſhould be no Maſterſhip among his*; pray then deliver us from this yoak of Bondage, *which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear*,

to wit, *Masterſhip in Religion*, and we hope we ſhall be willing to wait till you are better inform'd.

Page the 13 our Author proceeds as followeth, *As in no Age the reſiſters and gainſayers of care and Order in any of the Lords Servants have paſſed without the marks of Gods rebuke, ſo they that have conteſted and oppoſed the wiſdome of God in his faithful Servants have ever fail'd of their purpoſe and have been finally manifeſted to have been led by a wrong Spirit, and as obſervable it is that thoſe by whom the Lord has eminently appeared and who were the firſt Inſtruments of his ſeveral diſpenſations to the Sons of Men have allwayes exerciſed that Authority amongſt the People they have gathered and have conſtantly been preſerved from falling away though ſome or other have riſen up againſt them with that clamor as if they had ſet up themſelves and were apart from what they taught or were or took too much upon them, but what have they all come to, read and Judge*, &c.

Anſwer, 'Tis clear that the genuine and direct ſenſe of all this is to get us into a dependance upon and under the Notion of Elderſhip, and to perſwade or affright into that Implicite Reverence as that we ſhould not examine what is ſaid or done by them, but the receiving things preſumptively on the vallue of others, hath fill'd the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity with *Ignorance* as well as *error*, as is excellently ſet forth in *addreſs to Proteſtants* (*Page* 136 and ſo to the end of that Head) there wants nothing but application and that is needful becauſe Example prevailes more then Precept. Now that we may avoid that fault in others which you have ſo warmly and truly taxed in others we will as freely examine this Part as we have done the reſt and for that end pray who are theſe Servants you intend and how muſt we certainly know them? For truly as before if there muſt be a dependance they ought to be ſet forth, and what is all this care you ſpeak of? Is it that of *Maryes*

or

or that of *Martha's*? That was so Cumbred about many things that thought *Mary* took little care, and what was the reason, but that her selfe was cumbred too much? It seems the *lamen* by this Noise and Clamor that is made about it; 'tis a part that may be taken away which makes those con[illegible] sensible of it, that they cannot let others be quiet [illegible] *chosen the better part.*

[illegible] conclude or think that such as are dissatisfy[illegible] meetings doe therein oppose the mind of the L[illegible] his Servants, yet how should that be? Whi[illegible] *those things are not matter of Conscience and that they [illegible] in judgement with you in the Worship and Doctrines of truth*, what is it not a Doctrine of truth and matter of Conscience to believe true Prophets? Again what do you mean by those words *contesting the Wisdom of God*? Do you intend that Womens Meetings (the matter in question) was set up by *the Wisedom of God* to be practised? But pray how can this be when you tell us that *the things in difference relate not to God nor is matter of Conscience*? What set up *by the Wisdome of God* to be observed and yet neither *relates to God, nor is matter of Conscience*? What think you of it? Is not this very strange and inconsistant? If not pray explain your selves better.

But further you tell us, *those made eminent have been constantly preserved from falling away tho opposed; but what came such to as did oppose read and Judge.*

Answer, Here you bear witness to your selves, and what is this but to affright Us into submission to your pretences? But pray how must we know those things, for excluding the Apostles times and those before, where must we read all this you tell of? What do you bid us *read and Judge*, and can not tell where, or at least does not? [illegible] be sure this is noise, to say no more, for it can not be [illegible]dification,

Again, what do you mean by thoſe *Diſpenſations* he ſpeaks of? He might at leaſt have given an Inſtance of what he intended, which being omitted, 'tis like the reſt, more to amuſe then inform us; but will you allow thoſe dealings of God with *Iſrael* in *Egypt* and ſo into *Canaan*, to be included in the Diſpenſations he ſpeaks of? If you will 'tis well, if not, yet tis clear to us they are a ſign of Gods dealing with Men now, in Order to bring them into peace and reſt with himſelfe, nay what if we ſay a Figure of Gods dealing with Man from the beginning to the end; for firſt here is *Iſrael* in *Canaan* which may ſtand as a Figure of Mans State in Paradice, *Iſraels* going down into *Egipt* by reaſon of Famine, a Figure of Mans driving out of Paradiſe, *Iſrael's* relief comfort and ſatisfaction in *Egipt*, a Figure of Mans Fall whileſt alive in the World, being dead to God; the Law or Power of Death having dominion over him; and *Iſreal* in bondage in *Egipt* a Figure of Mans fall, and miſery when ſenſible of it, being truly quickned and thereby made to know the Power or Law of ſin in his Members; but obſerve this bondage in *Egipt* preceded their deliverance, and made way or prepared them for their going out into the Wilderneſs, now as the Wilnerneſs was a different State to that of *Egipt*, ſo the travel there fitted them for the poſſeſſi- of *Canaan*; ſo far as its ſaid of that generation, who had ſeen Gods wonders in *Egipt*, and had experience of his various dealings or diſpenſations, that *they did walk ſweetly with the Lord*, but when another Generation aroſe that did not know thoſe things but by hearſay, though they was in the ſame Land, *they ſoan forſook the Lord and ſerved Idols*; from hence there appears a neceſſity for every individual ſoul to have experience of thoſe various dealings of God in a ſpiritual ſenſe in Order to their *walking humbly with him*. Obſerve there was perfect different States and diſpenſations *in the ſame age, that is, to the ſame People*

contrary

contrary to what you aſſert; here was *Canaan* Liberty, and Freedome, oppoſed to *Egipt* bondage and Oppreſſion, and at laſt *Canaan* reſt to the Wilderneſs Travels; and as there was thoſe real different States and perfect change of diſpenſations in the ſame age, to the ſame People, ſo was their Leader, (obſerve that) as truly changed: For *Moſes* how eminent ſoever in the bringing them out of *Egipt*, and through the Sea, yet could he not bring them through *Jordan* into *Canaan*, a Type of the true reſt; no, that was *Joſhua's* work, *Moſes's* Miniſter, the Figure of the true Jeſus, which deſerves your ſerious conſideration, for in this change of diſpenſation lies your great miſtake. We might ſay more, but ſhall add only this that what was then in the Figure is now to be done in the Subſtance, what was then done in the Letter, is now to be done in Spirit; for Gods *Iſrael* now is *after the Spirit and not after the fleſh*, and are to be gathered from Man to God; ſo that if you do not throw down your Crowns, there by making way for his Government, by freely delivering up all unto him, but in ſtead thereof by reflecting upon your abillities to Rule, ſhall ſeek to perpetuate your Government under the Notion of Elderſhip, neither you that ſeek this dependance, nor thoſe that depend upon you can enter the good Land, of which *Canaan* was a Figure; and what then? If you go not forth again into *Egipt* you muſt die in the wilderneſs.

But we have more to this purpoſe, in this *Page* it followes, *nor was it ever heard of* (ſayes our Author) *in the dealings of God with the Sons of men that he varyed or changed his diſpenſations in the life time of the Inſtruments*, (obſerve) *of any of them as ſome have been ready to imagine nor yet in that age in which he has brought them forth*, &c.

Anſwer, What adoe here is to get your Government eſtabliſhed. If it were Chriſts our Lords, there would be none of this Noiſe; but as ſure as you ſeem you're miſtaken

that

that God has varyed his dispensations in the same age is clear above; for those very People of whom it was testified that *they did walk sweetly with the Lord* were of such as had seen Gods wonders in *Egypt*, in the Sea, and at Mount *Sinai*, had known a travel in the Wilderness; and their Leader changed, and that before they entered *Canaan*, did know the dividing of the Land, and *a sitting under their own Vine*, none being left to make them afraid; and this under *Joshua* and not *Moses*, according to the Figure, is sufficient to shew the wrongness of your assertion, that again, that *God never varied or changed his dispensation in the life time of the Instrument of them nor in that Age*, this is still as wrong as the former, nay false in fact, for Instance *John* the Baptist. For that dispensation wherein he was so Eminent was truly varyed if not changed in his life time, that it was varyed and to be changed is clear from the Baptists own testimony, and that it was changed in the same Age, is past scruple or contradiction, and not to *John* Baptist only but to Christ also, first in flesh and then in Spirit.

Now as those assertions are wrong and contrary to the truth, so are they of dangerous consequence to the Souls of men; by perpetuating Mans Government in stead of Christs; there's something like that saying *Where is the Promise of his coming? For since the Fathers dyed all things continue alike*, for like to that is this that *God never varied or changed his dispensation in the same Age, nor in the life time of the Instruments of any of them*, in this all things continue alike as they ever did; and then on this foot must not you under this profession degenerate as others have done before in your sense? But pray how contrary is this to our Saviours advice to his Disciples and to all Men. For sayes he, *What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch*; and why must we watch? Why, because *you know not at what hour your Master will come*, and pray who is this Master, but the Lord

our

our God; that changes and varies his diſpenſations when it pleaſeth him, but rarely or never perceived by the Carnal mind nor by the greateſt Formaliſt in Religion, no, no they'r the greateſt enemies of it; 'tis true you do not deny but the Diſpenſation may be changed but though you can not tell certainly when it ſhall be, yet you preſume to tell and that certainly when it ſhall not be; and that's *not in this Age*; ſo that whiles this Age laſts, we need not Watch in your ſenſe; 'tis true your words imply God may alter this Diſpenſation when this Age is over, and when all thoſe eminent Inſtruments are dead, but not till then however, and thus by Preaching us into a *ſleepy Ignorance* you hope to ſecure your Government as long as you and we live, and indeed that's long enough. But if you could watch for us that we need not but may reſt ſecure as long as this Age laſts or you live, yet ſeeing the Diſpenſation in your ſenſe may be changed when this Age is over, and when all thoſe Eminent Inſtruments are dead; and then ſeeing there may be occaſion to Watch *for the Maſters coming*, it would be needful at leaſt for the good of others if not for us, to ſet forth fairly, *what you mean by this Age, and who certainly are thoſe Eminent Inſtruments, and what this Diſpenſation is* that you intend, that ſo when this Age is over and thoſe Inſtruments are all dead, then People may prepare to watch *for the Maſters coming* to change this Diſpenſation; all this and more is the Genuin Conſequence of thoſe Poſitions and aſſertions, which we muſt ſay, is as carnal as they'r preſumptious, and is a plain deferring of the Maſters coming; and what follows but what ever did *Beating of your fellow Servants*; that this is truly the condition and danger of all thoſe that aſſert as above, own or ſtand by it, is to us an undoubted truth, and therefore in order to *awaken ſome* and forwarn others we can do no leſs then aſſert, that *he that is come, is yet to come*, that ſo by a true watching and

waiting

waiting for his coming ſome may avoid that great danger thoſe are in, that deferr it.

And indeed this preſumption that *the Diſpenſation is not to be changed in this Age*, is both your danger and miſtake; for this makes the Diſpenſations of God to lie chiefly in outward Modes of Worſhip, in outward Forms of Diſcipline, and in the Government of Men, and this in ſtead of leading the mind to God, leads from him, becauſe in ſtead of waiting for the Kingdom and Government of Chriſt, and the increaſe of it which is Spiritual, this ſets up what is outward and Carnal, which may be altered and changed from one thing to another, and yet the mind unregenerated: and therefore thoſe diſpenſations of God, that convert the ſoul to God are Spiritual, and are the ſame now they have been through all Ages, of which that unto *Iſrael* and the compleating of that Diſpenſation by our Saviour is a true and perfect Figure to us and all men; but ſeeing you ſay *there is to be no change of Diſpenſation in this Age*, Pray when is it that you intend to *preſent* thoſe that depend on you, *as chaſt Virgins to Chriſt*? That they may be married unto him; for as this ought to be; ſo certainly you will allow in that State ſuch may ſimply depend on him; it does not appear you intend it as long as you live becauſe you ſay *there is to be no variation or changing of Diſpenſation in this Age* and when may it be expected then? For thoſe that ſucceed you in the Government may as juſtly deny a change of Diſpenſation in their Age as you do in this and to be ſure they'l be as unwilling to allow of it as you; for why? They muſt bear the Image that you beget, and as they will make you their Authority they will build on you, as it has been through all the Reformations, and then as they are not like to know ſo much as ſome have done in this Age they'l be but bigotted the more; *for indeed where there is not a conſtant waiting for the Lords Coming to do*

what

what he pleaſeth with us, a falſe reſt is ſet up, and ſuch become asmuch as in them lyes the limiters of God and good Men, and the preventers of the further diſcoveries of the mind of God, but if we come to be a Figure of the Univerſal Church, of which Chriſt our Lord is truly head, we muſt know a change and alteration of the Diſpenſation by which this ſtriving for Maſterſhip and Ceremony may ceaſe and that in our Age, for 'tis certain that Gods appearance is twofold to Man in the work of reſtoring Man unto himſelf, and if we be of Spiritual *Iſrael* we muſt know a coming through the work of a firſt Covenant, before we can know the Second, whereupon it follows as there muſt be a Preparation before there can be a Choice, there is a Legal Diſpenſation to be known or paſſed through before that of the Goſpel can be fully underſtood.

'Tis true if we could conſider rightly that the end of all Gods dealing with men is to bring them to himſelf and ſecure them for the future againſt the attempts of the Enemy, we might call or eſteem all Goſpel, according to *Addreſs to* Proteſtants *(Page* 82) where 'tis ſaid *the Law is the Goſpel begun, the Goſpel the Law fulfilled or finiſhed, they cannot be parted*, by the word *parted* we conceive he means the Goſpel cannot come or be witneſſed, exeept it begin in the Law; for when we conſider that all men in their firſt State are concluded under ſin, and that in the work of regeneration there is trouble before peace, and condemnation before Juſtification, and that *no ſuffering for the preſent ſeems Joyous*, then may we ſay thoſe diſpenſations of Law and Goſpel, firſt and ſecond Covenant are now in being and as diſtinguiſhable to the Spiritual Traveller as ever.

'Tis true Chriſt our Lord is Heir of all things, but our firſt knowledge of him is in his deſcending, where he deveſts himſelf of his glory, in this he condeſcends to lay hold of us, or otherwiſe it were impoſſible for us to apprehend or lay

hold of him, you know 'tis written *the Holy Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified*, and yet he both had Disciples and they was taught of him, nay when raised from the dead and they were still taught of him, they had not yet received the Holy Spirit; for he was not yet ascended, but when the Power from on high came upon them, the true witness that Jesus was glorified, *then they received the Holy Spirit that was to abide with them.*

But to apply it, if our first knowledge of Christ be in his descending then must we know him ascend where he was before, or the work cannot be compleated, but this cannot be without a change of dispensation; thus instead of deny it we ought to wait for it. Again when we consider that since transgression at least Man is made under a Law wrote, or to be wrote in the hearts or minds of all Men (of which that wrote in stone to *Israel* was but as a Figure) and that by this Law comes the true knowledg of Sin, and all this Ministration cannot pass away unfulfilled therefore does our Lord descend to assist us to fulfil this dispensation as a Servant, and differeth not from a Servant, tho he is *Lord of all*; you know he was made under the Law to *Israel* that he might redeem them truly prepared by it, from under the Law, and he is now as well as then a *Minister of the Sanctuary* and then must we not know him first under a Legal dispensation as well as then? For that dispensation given to *Israel* that he then fulfilled in the flesh was never given to us, and as that was not to continue, it is the Substance of that which remains, that we are to inquire out; God appeared by his servants, and by his Son to the house of *Israel* after the flesh; the first was to prepare, the latter to perfect; and those that are not faithful in the first part now, can not know the latter no more then *Israel* in the figure did, thus there may be a coming a great way in the first part of the work and yet miss in the latter.

Well

Well then as there is a Servant ſtate and Sons-ſtate, the firſt is preparation, and anſwers to a Legal diſpenſation, or the miniſtration of Condemnation, but the latter being truly election or choice anſwers to that of the Goſpel or Miniſtration of life, the firſt condemns the ſinner, the latter the ſin, now as there muſt be preparation before there can be choice or Election the firſt State is *abſolutely neceſſful*, but yet as there is a better ſtate there is a neceſſity to wait for a change of the firſt to all that comes truly to know the reconciliation to God through the death of Chriſt; *for as we cannot live unto the righteouſneſs of Legal diſpenſation except we dye unto ſin, ſo we cannot know true Sonſhip, except we know a dying to all our righteouſneſs attain'd in the State of Preparation.* for we muſt have it before we can part with it.

In the firſt State we receive a Talent, and except we ſerve God with all our Strength, it cannot rightly be improved, therefore muſt we put to our ſtrength and thus we cooperate with the grace given to make all according to the pattern ſhewed in the Holy Mount, and here we follow Chriſt in the Regeneration, that is in the begitting and quickning to fulfil the work given us to do, for we have a work to do; and as we do cooperate with the Talent to do that work ſomething of the Man, ſomething of the fleſh remains, therefore muſt we come in to the Death of Chriſt, which we can never truly know, except we firſt be quickned by him, ſo then quickning is preparation, but to come in to the death of Chriſt in the fleſh is the perfecting the Covenant of works; you know, whilſt our Lord was in the Fleſh he told his Diſciples, *he had overcome the World*, but *through death* the Apoſtle tells us *he deſtroyed him that had the power of death*, and as there was two different diſpenſations then, in the reſtoration of man, they ſtill continue, and the latter is as contrary to the former as that of our Lord was unto *Moſes*, in the firſt we are Servants and if faithful we are ſo far from denying a

change of dispensation that we daily wait for it, that we may give an account of the Improvement of the Tallent; for in that stands a change of the dispensation, the first State has life and death set before it, with a Promise of a reward or Punishment according as the creature is faithful or otherwise, and as faithful receive the good from time to time but as we do cooperate with the Tallent, this reaches no further then the Covenant of works, and as it can not make perfect as to the new and Heavenly Man, 'tis needful to know what can; and that is the true knowledge of the mistery of Christs death in the flesh, for that perfectly reconciles unto God, by which the one Offering is known that perfects for ever them that are sanctified, for there only can the Worker be freely offered up unto God wholly for a burnt Offering, as a free Sacrifice, and then *to die with Christ to the flesh is gain*, thus is the Death of the Saints pleasant in the eyes of the Lord, it being the Sweetest Sacrifice because *the more they die the more they live to God*, this was the State the Apostle so much vallued as he esteemed *to know nothing amongst them but Christ and him Crucified, and to be made conformable to his Death* was his *chief desire, that if possible he might attain to the resurrection of the dead*, you see he was so far from limitting the dispensations of God to what he did know as he did not limit or seem to bound them short of attaining to the Resurrection of the dead.

And of this change of dispensation, we have a Figure in *Abrams offering up of Isaac*, God promised him a Son, he cooperated with the Promise to bring forth *Isaac*; that being done, that there might be a distinction betwixt Work and Grace, tho its true if we speak generally all Gods dealing with Man to bring him unto himself is Grace, and thus the least measure given to profit with is truly Grace, but when we distinguish with respects to the work of God in Man by which the restoration is brought about and reconciliation

ciliation wrought the latter is termed grace as opposed to that of Works, and that this distinction might be clear *Abraham* must offer up *Isaac* in whom the Promise stood, it was his all, and therefore in the offering of him up, the Ram the begetter or worker was discover'd behind the Bush, *who was there before but not seen till now*, but as soon as seen how gladly did *Abram* offer up the Ram to God wholly for a burnt Offering, O how gladly did *Abraham* part with the Ram, with the Worker and how easily when he saw that was all that was intended *in this great tryal*, and now *Isaac* is received in the grace in the Second Covenant, and now and not before can it only be truly said, *it no more of work least any man should boast*, no this act excludes the boasting and the boaster for ever, and as this throughly reconciles unto God so it perfectly destroyes the enmity, that arises about Opinion, and Ceremony, or about the Formallies of Form on a Religious score, the first part of the work shuts out *Ishmael* the Enemy *as an evil doer*, but the latter act shuts out or destroyes him *as a Serpent*, wherein he keeps up the enmities amongst the several professors of Religion, *under the shew or likeness of Good, and so make Religion which should be the very cause of good will and Peace, to be cause of enmity and strife*; and this deceives poor Man, and if we were but Spiritually minded the Scripture would be found to be writ for our Learning and comfort, and is as applicable in Spiritual sense now as then in the Letter, wherein the Harmony as well as the excellency appears, But the chief difference that we find in the dispensations (save that those were more outward, and these now are more inward) is, that what was then done in *Israel*, as a people or a Society, every particular or individual Men ought to wait to know done in and for himself, for *Israel* in the flesh came through those various states as Figures to Us; for Instance they were all in *Egypt*, passed through the Sea, received the

Law

Law, travelled the Wilderness, passed *Jordan*, and entred *Canaan* together: but 'tis not so now with any Society; and seeing no Society on the account of Religion can be in one and the same State together, that Society that is the truest Figure of the universal Church of God must take in all those various States that *fear God and work Righteousness*, therefore a right Gospel Church, with respect to outward Society, is a comprehensive Church, and cannot shut out for Opinion; which deserves your most serious consideration, in relation to your Brethren at least.

But to apply what has been said to our case; as it is sure that every Man, that comes truly to be reconciled unto God, must know the dispensation changed in his Age; so 'tis as certain that what is to be done in one Man, ought to be done in all Men, and must be done in all, that comes truly to know the new and heavenly Man put on: but seeing this cannot be done in all at one time, as we are a Society, it must at least be done in our Elders or Leaders, or 'tis not possible that we should be as a Society, a true Figure of the Universal Church of God. For as are the Elders or Leaders, so is the People in a great measure that depend on them; and therefore if our Leaders have narrow Spirits and wrong Notions of things; the People must be so too: whereupon it followes, if our Leaders deny a change of Dispensation and cease to travel, the People must needs do so too, and therefore whilest our Elders and Leaders know not a Change of Dispensation in this Age, which is, a coming through the mistery of Christs Death, and a dying with Christ to the flesh, by which the beauty of External things passeth away in the true Ministration of Life, as such cannot *be dead with Christ to the Rudiments of the World*, they will be burthened with their Opinions and Ordinances, and therein burthen others. We intreat you to Consider of this; for it was and is on this very score that the greatest part of all Religious Societies have fail'd;

wherein

wherein their Leaders and Elders were allwayes most in fault. For they could allow of no variation or change of Dispensation but what they made themselves; and is not this matter of fact? [redacted] allwayes missed of the mind of God, both as he appeared by himself and by his Servants; it has been thus through all the Reformation, and was thus in that great example of *Israel*; for tho they received the Law to prepare, as a *Schoolmaster to bring unto Christ*, and did pretend to look for him, yet could not allow of the change of Dispensation that he brought, so sticking in their own Opinions and Judgements of things, instead of receiving him, that should have perfected the work they had known begun, they rejected him, for they said *had not of the Rulers* (that is Elders and Leaders) *believed? But the People that knew not the Law were accursed.* And those were such as seem'd to have a great esteem for the Law, the first part of the work, yet *taught for Doctrines the Commandments of men*; by which the People were also misled that depended on them; and whilest you deny a change of Dispensation in this Age, 'tis clear you stick in your own Opinions and Judgements, and are as truly in danger to miss the mind of God and mislead others, as any that have been before you.

But observe, for you know, or at least may, that whilest our Lord was in the flesh he was tyed unto the *Jews*, or however did appear so, and here he seem'd straitned or limited with respect to the rest of Mankind; but when he had fulfilled the work given him to do, as he dyed to the flesh of the *Jew* he became universal, *giving Gentiles as well as Jews an entrance unto the Father by one Spirit, and of twain made one New Man*, and cast off *the seed of Abraham after the flesh, and chused his seed after the Spirit, from hence he took off all confidence in the flesh*; for if the *Jews* had not herein to trust, surely no Society now can have wherein to trust on that account.

But

But the Apostle tells us, *if the casting off the Jews was the riches of the world, what should be their receiving, but as life from the dead?* And which way could this great benefit come unto Mankind in their receiving [redacted] more then in this; that as then they should have known true reconciliation unto God, they would have been acquainted with the various States that are to be passed through before that can be known; and then as they would have been truly fitted to have informed Mankind of the different effects of each, so their credit with all that had received Christ would have given them that advantage to have been believed; then should we have been truly informed, that generally speaking the work of God in restoring Man unto himself was really twofold; and that the first part, tho a glorious work, yet it was but to prepare and not to perfect; and as it was but to prepare, there was a necessity to wait to know the Dispensation changed. For had the *Jews*, as a Society received the Messiah, they would then have known him, to inlarge them in the Spirit, by taking away the confidence in the flesh; then with one voice they would have informed us, that whilest they continued in the first part of the work, tho it was glorious, yet their Spirits was narrow and shut up to the rest of Mankind, and their thoughts was childish and partial toward God; for they did conclude, that because God had done so much for them, he had either forgotten or rejected all others, but receiving the Messiah as they would have known the Dispensation changed so they would have been inlarged in Spirit; then would they have informed us, *that God was God of the Gentile as well as of the Jew*, and that *as he was Lord over all, so he was rich unto all that in truth called upon his Name*; this would have mortified and slain all our strife about Forms, carnal Ordinances, Opinion and Ceremony; but alas in stead of coming as a Body or Society from the Form to the Power, coming out

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of or through the first Covenant Works and from under a Legal Dispensation, wherein the confidence in the flesh stood, as well as the warrs and strife into the Second Covenant, in to the ministration of Life, where the good will and Peace is; that so they might have been a perfect Figure of the work of God with Man and therein been the *great example* to the World, as well of Gods Love and good will, as of that Righteousnes and Justice which he required; they stuck in the first part of the work; and so that *Elect and Precious Stone*, that laid in *Sion*, *became to them a stumbling Stone and Rock of Offence*, for tho they seemed to own and magnifie *Moses* and the Prophets dispensation, which God owned and appointed, yet not owning the Change of Dispensation in the Messiah, they became as a Sect, too narrow in their Minds and Spirits, to make known the good unto Mankind intended in their chusing; for the casting them off singly was not the riches of the World; but because they stuck in the flesh, and could not follow the Lord fully, as their Father *Abraam* did, to manifest the good, they must be casten off or else it could not have been known, thus it is clear they was rejected and casten off because they denyed the Change of Dispensation, which should have inlarged them in Spirit, to have been the *blessing of Nations*.

Pray consider if something of this hath not attended all the Reformations according to their respective Interest; they could never as a body receive those further appearances of God testified unto by such as the Lord sent and and made use of; and therefore stuck in a fleshly knowledg of what they first knew or received, like the *Jews*, which tho good in it self so far as it reacht, but not considering that as God has done great things for them, he could still do greater, they durst never trust him in the delivering up of the Talent therefore in stead of becoming more

Spiritual, they ſtuck in the fleſh; ſo that we may ſee in ſome ſort what is of Man comes to be manifeſted in a Society which is one body on a religious ſcore, and that is fleſh and Spirit, which can never be reconciled, and therefore the one muſt prevail, and accordingly as they prevail that body may be denominated, but in particular Perſons we have ſeen the fleſh overcom'd and that *univerſallity of Spirit* brought forth teſtified too in the birth of Chriſt, yet truly there wants the Example in a body or Society of Men, ſo needful ſo neceſſary for the honour of God, and the Peace of Mankind; and from hence have come thoſe ſeperations and Diviſions that have been and muſt continue *till Shilo come*. And now you are upon the Stage, and more may be expected from you then others, by how much you conclude God to have done more for you then others; and as you pretend more unto the Spirit then others. If then you do reſemble *Spiritual Iſrael* more then others, you muſt wait to place your Unity not upon the Profeſſor of the Truth, for he may be but as the fleſhly child of *Abraham*, but upon the Poſſeſſor, and upon all travelling for *Sion*, tho ſo ignorant of the way, that they weep becauſe they know it no better. For 'tis thoſe and not the former that *follow the Lord where ever he leads*, and thoſe he will own for ever, whether they be known unto the World or worldly Profeſſors, or not, he knowes them, and is gathering them together in one, by deſtroying the enmity as it ſtands in carnal Ordinances; and doth declare now, as he did by his Apoſtle that *of every Nation thoſe that fear God and work righteouſneſs are accepted of him*; and what is accepted of God ought to be accepted of Man; and therefore if you conceive you are Leaders (not of *Iſrael* in the fleſh, but of *Iſrael in the Spirit*, you muſt know your Spirits inlarged, that you may own what God owns; for *as our Principal is univerſal, our good will ought to be as*

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large to the Children of Men, for consider, *an Universal principle and a narrow limited Spirit are inconsistant.* But this can never be without a change of the Dispensation come, you know *Israel* after the flesh was to allow the *Gentile* to worship God in the outward Court. Pray mind then if their outward Court was not larger then ours? 'Tis true they had an inward Court, that such could not come to, till Circumcised; was there then an outward Court, and an inward; and have not we what answers to them now? What is fit for the Society of good Men, may not that very well be allowed to come into our Society or outward Court? For they who do not come thus farr, cannot come into the inward Court, yet seeing they must come to the outward before the inward, shall not we allow them here? Testifying at the same time to the Inward Court, which none can come to but *by the true Circumcision in Spirit.* Thus it is clear, if our Outward Court were but a little more large, our Inward Court would certainly be the more prized vallued and sought after. Again you know the Leader in *Israel*, in their Travel from *Egypt* to *Canaan*, was to Travel according to the least of *Israel*, and did allwayes own such as were Circumcised, tho at eight dayes old to be of the Church of God in the Figure; and pray will not this hold as true to Spiritual *Israel*? What is Circumcision in the flesh now but a holy Conversation performed in the fear of God? For as this is so far accepted of God it really fits for the Society of good men, and therefore its impossible it should be rejected of that People or Society or Church that is a true Figure of the Church of God; now least you should run this into an extream, we will at present bound it with respect to your Brethen, *who have come out and suffered with you for the Testimony of a good Conscience, and do yet in your own sense agree with you in the worship and Doctrines of truth*; and

yet for all this are ſhut out and excluded by you, for not complying with you in your Opinions, yea meer Opinions, for that they are ſuch, is put out of doubt, when you tell us, *thoſe things of Difference do not relate to Faith, Conſcience or Religion.* We beſeech you to be ſerious, for this evidently makes manifeſt the narrowneſs of your Spirits, and that narrowneſs of Spirit demonſtrates a neceſſity for you to know a change of the Diſpenſation. For 'tis impoſſible whiles you thus remain that you ſhould be that Figure of the true Church, to which the gathering can be, by bringing forth *that peace on Earth that good will to Men, and glory to God on high*; where only *the Swords are beaten into Plowſhares, and Spears into Pruning Hookes*; 'tis this and the glory of this, to which the gathering of the People muſt be; we ſaw ſomething of this in our coming forth, as our teſtimony againſt all force, wrath and fighting with carnal weapons do teſtifie.

But alas! Not truly travelling in Spirit to know the work compleated, we have not yet come to know the ſubſtance of what was ſeen in the Viſion, without which the other will prove but as a dead and Formal buſineſs. Nor can you know this without a change of the diſpenſation, and therefore whiles you conclude againſt it in your mind, it is clear to us, you ſtick in the works of a firſt Covenant, and abide but under a Legal Diſpenſation, and tho you appear to be againſt the Enemy as *an evil doer*, that is no more then others have done before you; but not knowing the Diſpenſation changed; tho the Enemy does not attach you with what is evil and Immoral, yet he deceives you as a Serpent, as is apparent in this noiſe you make about your Opinions, and further clear in this Narrowneſs of Spirit that appears amongſt you, as is amongſt the various profeſſors of Religion, that except you wait to know the Diſpenſation changed, the Serpent will beguile you as he has

done

done others; for in that appearance he cannot be destroyed, but as we come in to the Death of Christ to the flesh and know the Mistery of it. We intreat you to consider of those things seriously, and in the fear of God, that the good will and love that is known in the writing those things may be felt; and then tho much might be said about this matter, yet may this suffice, but if in stead of considering them, you will contest them by your cunning; then if the Lord see it meet, more may be said; but in the interim this may serve.

As little as this Book is, many more things might be objected against; we shall chiefly take notice of one passage more in the 11. *Page* and with it conclude; *it followes* (sayes our Author) *I would therefore beseech you Friends to ponder it in your own minds upon what a narrow point your distance stands, and that the main and tender point is allowed you*, viz. *Conscience is free and unconcern'd in the question and the visible ground of Difference being so small weigh with your selves by what has been, what may be the consequence of this lamentable breach*, &c.

Answer, As little as this distance is made by you, we do not find it fairly set out; we will indeavour to set it forth as it is without any reserve, that we may come to a clear Issue with you in the matter; and first wee'l take notice how farr we agree in your sense according to your confesions in this *Epistle*, that so a better and clearer Judgment may be made of the difference (*Page* the 2.) you grant *we are one in Judgment with you in the Worship and Doctrines of truth*; therefore in those Essential Points we cannot differ in your sense, which we desire may be noted for the future. Further you say, *We own the end*, that is, of good Order in the Society, for that must be intended or nothing; and not only so but you say, *We allow of the means which can be no less then such fitting Methods as may answer that end*,

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Page 11.) Thus in your own ſenſe, if you are ingenious, in your confeſſions, we cannot want what is eſſential to demonſtrate our Duty to God or Men: We own Women are concern'd in Converſation, having Souls to ſave as well as Men; we allow they may Meet apart from Men on ſome diſtinct occaſions; we Impoſe no new Opinion nor obtrude any new Method in Diſcipline; You neither do nor have any thing to charge us with that is Immoral or evil; Pray then let not the Bear skin be put on us for the future let things appear as they are.

For on your part 'tis clear that you make the difference to ſtand and ariſe from thoſe things, which under the Notion of Elders you have brought in and exhorted to; we Joyn Iſſue with you here, and ſay 'tis true, the difference ſtand here as to matter of fact, or what does externally appear; but we ſay our Diſſatisfaction is deeper; it is with that Spirit and Power, that without reſerve requires compliance with what under the notion of Elders you exhort too; it is here we place the ground of our Difference and Diſſatisfaction: We intreat you to be ſerious: for we moſt ſurely believe, that the allowing in our caſe ſuch a power to Man under the Notion of Elderſhip begets and leads into an Implicit reverence and Blind obedience, and ſo directly leads into Ignorance and ſlavery: And *as the firſt is inconſiſtent with the true knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; ſo is the latter with that freedom we ought to Injoy, as we are a free and voluntary Society.* Now we ſay, had you practiſed Womens Meetings, as believing a Service in them, and only recommended them to be uſed as a Service was found, we believe we ſhould not have openly oppoſed; hoping as the liberty of examination (*the undoubted right of every true Chriſtian*) had been truly and conſcientiouſly preſerved by you; things that had been wrong would have dyed of themſelves, but when inſtead of recom-

recommending, you injoyn, & when in stead of leaving things to be freely examined, you add all the force and skill you have to uphold them, no way is left for us to stand clear in our Consciences to God; *but in standing fast in that freedom and liberty our Lord has purchased for us*; nor any other way have we left to indeavour to undeceive you and others, but by shewing our dissatisfaction. For to be silent here, is to give consent; and what strengthens wrong, can never take it away. Meeting therefore with this Power that is wrong exerted in this of Womens Meetings, its here then the difference must stand as to matter of fact; and as the allowing of this Power does in our Judgment and understanding (as above) bring in Ignorance and Slavery, therefore we say if the things might be of some service in some places, yet to impose them universally upon the Society is wrong, and we are in Conscience bound to refuse them, as against the truth, and distructive to our Christian Freedom, as it stands in the Liberty of Examination and choice. Therefore though the thing cannot be said to be simply evil in it selfe, yet the consequence is evil, *and we are bound to shun and avoid the appearance of evil as well as the evil it self.* Thus the state of this great business must stand as stated *Page* 20. and 21. that is, *there must be a necessity for those things that you bring in against your Brethrens consent, or you must set forth that you have a right under the Notion of Elders to Impose upon the Society that for which in truth there is no necessity.* For now we say in plain words there is no Necessity for Womens constant distinct Meeting for Government in our Societies, and deny that you have any Power lodged in you under the Notion of Eldership, by Virtue of our constitution, to bring or impose upon Us that which in truth there is no Necessity for.

First, that there is no necessity for Womens Meetings as above,

above, is clear from the Practice of Friends, whiles we had them not, as well as from the Practise of such now as have them not, and yet owns the same Principle: Again, the Practice of all Christians from the beginning demonstrate there can be no necessity for them in a general way, as insisted on by you. For if there had been a necessity for them to Order or Government, they could not have been without them; seeing what there is a necessity for, is as Essential to the being of that thing. But 'tis matter of fact, that they have all done, the business of their respective Societies without this Mode contended for by you, therefore we may safely conclude there can be no necessity for Womens constant and distinct Meetings for Government in our Society; and indeed if things are brought in to the Society against the minds of your Brethren, by which difference arises, nothing can justifie the proceeding on your part but a necessity for the thing. For if this of Necessity be not consider'd in our case as abounder, a door is opened to fill us with Opinions and Ceremony, seeing there wants nothing to introduce them but a specious Pretence, which never fail'd to wait on such as affect Government, or reflect on their own abillities for it. Now as there can be no necessity for Womens constant Meeting for Government, for you to claim Power, under the Notion of Elders to bring in to the Society against the minds of your Brethren such things as in truth there is no Necessity for, this we say is a violence done to our Constitution, as we imbodied a free and voluntary Society and is also against the truth of our Principle and Opinion.

First, that it is a violence to our Constitution is clear for you know in our coming forth we did not choose any Elders to depend on, nor indeed could we according to our Profession; for as we asserted *that Christ our Lord was come in Spirit to teach and govern us, a teacher that we be could*

could not be removed into a corner, so he was only sufficient. And therefore the preheminence was to be given to him in all things. Thus it would have been against his Honour, and the truth of what we profess'd, to have chosen any Man to have depended upon; when Christ was come in Spirit to teach and govern, to depend on Man to do it, was to neglect the Fountain and chuse the Cistern; therefore as we neither did nor could, according to the truth of our Principles, chuse any Men to depend on, under any Name or Notion whatsoever, for any to chuse or Impose themselves upon Us, is wrong to Us, and a violence offered to our Constitution. For in short, observe; *it is really Ignorance of the sufficiency of Christ to chuse any Man so much as Mentally to depend on.* But 'tis Slavery to have others to chuse for or Impose themselves or their choice upon Us. You know as Christ our Lord was own'd to be come in Spirit to teach and Govern us, we were to bring all our thoughts words and deeds to him, that we might know the truth in what we thought said or did; for we were not to be our own but his, and as we were to bring our own words and deeds to him, certainly we were to bring the words and deeds of all others to him in which we were to be concernd. For as we could not know the truth of what we did our selves, but by the testimony or approbation of his Spirit, so 'tis beyond contradiction we can not know the words and deeds of others to be from the truth any other way; thus conviction or persuasion brought us together, and that must be preserved (till inviolably, or we can not continue a free People, examination of what we were to receive from others was truly asserted, as our undoubted right in our coming forth, and as the truth is but one, the reason is the same now as well as then, therefore to Impose an Eldership upon Us under any pretence whatsoever, and to destroyes or takes away the Liberty of Examination, 'tis a

violence done to our Constitution. Indeed what is brought in by violence must needs be upheld by force, or otherwise it will dye and come to nothing of it self; thus the force and strife you have used to uphold what you have brought in by violence demonstrate you more wrong then any argument we can use; when 'tis but seriously considered, that it is not Truth but Error that loses by tryal; nay the truth only gains the most when freely examined and tryed, and error loses most that way; what can discover your wrongness more then the denying a free Examination? For where that is taken away the prevailing of those things cannot be owing to the truth, but the force and conquest of Men; which as it is directly contrary to a free examination and choice, so 'tis beyond contradiction a violence done to our Constitution as we are a free and volluntary Society *confessing but one Lord and head.*

And as the bringing into our Society things for which there appear no necessity, and requiring complyance under the notion of Eldership, is a Violence done to our Constitutions so 'tis against the truth of our Principle & Profession. For you know, *the Lord from Heaven the second* Adam, *the quickning Spirit, the true Light that lighteth all Men coming into the world is Professed to be our foundation and asserted by us to be sufficient to lead into all truth all that truly adhere to him.* Now it must follow, whilest we thus confess him, that we truly adhere to him, or we do not, if we truly adhere to him, we must according to the truth of what we profess know his sufficiency, *and where the sufficiency of Christ our Lord is truly known such can not depend on Adam,* no 'tis Impossible, as in the Natural Figure, the Moon and Starrs do shew us light, but 'tis in the dark, 'tis in the night; therefore when the Sun comes, tho it does not take away that light, which the Moon and Stares have as to themselves, yet to us it takes it away, so that it is impossible, tho we had a mind to de-

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pend on that Light or have any benefit from it; and we are sure the *Sun of righteousness*, as he arises in the Soul, doth as much fulfill the Service and transcend the light of the Instrument; therefore on this foot we are to call no Man Doctor, Master, Father or Elder on Earth by way of Preheminence for our dependance; *because one is our Doctor, Master, Father, and Elder in Heaven*; and all such as are thus taught of him are Brethren; Christ and his Disciples in the dayes of his flesh are a true Figure of this; for he chose his Disciples they did not chuse him; and as he chose them out of the World they was simply to depend upon him, not one upon another; therefore when they thought of depending one upon another by consulting *who should be the greatest amongst them*, our Lord corrected their mistake and in them yours, if you lay claim to the like choice, by telling them *the Elder should be as the Younger, and he that ruled as he that served*, nay, *he that would be the greatest among them, must be Servant to all the rest*; then not Lord or Master to Impose upon the rest; and as he told them they *should call no Man Master, Doctor or Father*, so he forbad them to be called *so*; and we are sure it was the thing, as well as the Name, that was intended; whereupon it followes, that to seek this Preheminence by desiring this dependance under the Notion of Eldership, as it is contrary to the truth of our Principle and Profession, so 'tis against the very Sence and meaning of the Command of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this is to come in your own Name and not in his.

But on the other hand, whilst we confess *the Lord is come to teach and govern*, if we do not truly adhere to him, as such can not know the truth of what they do profess, so 'tis certain such do not truly believe in him; and if such think that want shall be supplyed by depending upon you; or that this is Christs Government, to be subject unto yours, they

are Miserably mistaken. And truly whilst you seek this dependance under the Notion of Eldership, you contribute to their mistake and are guilty of the Ignorance and Error such are in; for as (in the Figure above) the Disciples were not to gather unto themselves, but unto their Lord, knowing none could be truly taught except they came to him, so they knew that if they did come to him, he was sufficient, and therefore having brought 'em to him they did not interpose, *We have found the Messiah* said one, *Jesus of* Nazareth, can any good come out of *Nazareth*? *Come and see, try thy selfe, and then thou'l have the same ground to trust that we have*, or to this effect; and tis true according to our Profession, that *Christ our Lord is now as able to teach, and may be now as easily come to as then*; who is it then that dare strive for their Opinions, whilest such acknowledge the Lord is present? Thus if you were the Servants of Christ you must gather to him, and not to your selves; for we can not be the Disciples of Christ till we hear him our selves, nor followers of him till we know him go before us, and this we can not truly know whilest we depend on you or any Man. True Religion is founded on those two Commands, *to love God with all our heart and our Neighbour as our selves*; here's both our Duty to God and Men included; and Christ our Lord teacheth the latter as well as the former; and those that know not something of the truth of those things in their own minds, under our Profession are not yet come in to the School of Christ. Pray therefore let the People know that as Christ is head to the true Church in all things, he must be head to every Man in all things, that is a Member of this Church: So that to be of this Church is quite another thing then to be of any [illegible] Society whatever, (*Address to* Protestants *Page* 177) this building is rear'd without noise strife and contention; tis like its Figure the Temple built at *Jerusalem* in *Solomons* peaceful

reigh no Axe or Hammer heard there, all that at best is but in the Preparation, which ſo many have miſtaken for the choice: And ſo in ſtead of travelling for the true rest have ſet up a falſe one, growing great in ſtead of being humble, diſpiſing others in overvalluing themſelves. For all this noiſe and ſtrife in the beſt ſenſe is amongſt the Servants and Workmen, amongſt the drawers of Water, and hewers of Wood, and not among the Children and Sons of God. Now your Service if you have any is to bring to Chriſt, the true knowledge of him, and the ſtrife and the noiſe. For thoſe that ſit at his feet truly to hear him are quiet, and as they have choſen the better part, ſo are they not cumbred about many things. And as your Service is to bring to him, you ought to indeavour honeſtly to take out of the way whatever hinders coming to him, and indeed in this caſe, that is your own ſelf-hood, your affected and deſired Elderſhips for this is to beat wives to your ſelves, by ſeeking a relyance and dependance upon you, and this begets into Sects and Diviſions; for it is ſure while the People depend on you or any Man, they neither do nor can know the ſufficiency of Chriſt our Lord. Pray therefore conſider, that to ſeek this dependance upon you under the Notion of Elderſhip is really againſt the truth of our Principle and Profeſſion. For if you prevail it will fix the People in that which can never perfect, for all that depend on you, as they muſt allwayes be learning of you, ſuch can never be able *to know the truth as it is in Jeſus*; as it allwayes falls out where Perſons on a Religious score ſeek to bear Rule by their own means, and the People love to have it ſo: and as on this foot you will ſtill grow more narrow in your minds and Spirits, as true and juſt a ſeperation may be from you as any other People heretofore. We intreat you to weigh the matter, that ſo you may throw down your Crowns at the feet of Jeſus, *who alone is worthy to reign*, according to our Teſtimony in our beginning.

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Objection, But perhaps you will say, *It is true Christ our Lord is sufficient for all that truly adhere to him; but all that Profess Him do not adhere to him, and 'tis for their Souls that an Eldership is necessary, and that we are thus concerned that a check may be upon all Practices, as an expedient against Irregularity in Conversation, whether toward them that are without, or them that are within the same Communion, to which the strong will submit for the sake of the Weak, &c. Page the 5.*

Reflect, It seems your care is about those that do not truly adhere to Christ, and for the securing of them; you ought to be cautious that you do not burthen the Conscience of those that are faithful, for if what is good and evil could not be known and Judged of without Womens Meetings for Government, it were something to the purpose; but since it is clear it may, this seems but an Artifice to seek to inslave such as are conscientious and sincere to God, under pretence of taking care for those that are not; and is but a subtill argument to make way for the setting up Mans Government in stead of Christs; for what is this but to say we are not to examine what you bring in whiles you pretend to apply it to some good end? But if we do examin things and truly find they tend to Formallity and leads into Ignorance and Slavery, yet we must dissemble our conviction and dishonour our head to please you, whats this but to endeavour to make us owe more to you for Government then we do to the Civil Magistrate? 'Tis true *we are to Obey every Ordinance of Man for the Lords sake,* but yet we do not this blindfold; for as we are the Servants of Christ, and own him for our Lord and Head, we must examine what Man Injoyns, and if in our understanding it agrees with the truth we are bound in Conscience to obey: But if it do not, then Conscience rather obliges to suffer then dishonour our Head. And will you not allow us that liberty without making us suffer, which you take and insist upon

upon as a right. You know *Christ our Lord is due in all*, and cannot deny but that *he ought to be the Head of every Man*, and where he is truly head, we affirm, such can do no less with respect to his Honour, then examine what they are to receive, and to be singular here, or of the lesser number, is so farr from being wrong or a hazzard, that it is only just and safe. But perhaps you will Object, *shall not the evil doer be dealt with?*

We Answer Yes; for as we have granted this before we here confirm it; but then, who is this evil doer, ought to be considered. For you know, *you ought* (according to *Address to* Protestants (*Page 99*) *to make no other distinction of good and evil then God has made*; it followes then *you shall know them by their fruits* (sayes Christ) *So* (say you) *shall Men know them that sincerely believe, and confess Christ by their sanctified Manners, and blameless Conversation, and* (mark) *we note them that make other distinctions* (pray mind it,) *for God has made no other.* (again) *there will be but Goats and Sheep at the last, Holy and unholy, Just and unjust; therefore* (say you) *let that be our distinction* (observe it) *which ever was and will be Gods distinction; for all other measures* (pray mind) *are the effects of the Passions and Presumptions of Men.* Pray apply it; and, if you can but give what you have asserted to be right to receive, Contention will be laid asleep among us, for had you made no other distinctions then God has made, we'd had no difference.

But again, perhaps you will say, *this is to make void the Service of Instruments and to deny an Eldership in the Church of Christ.*

Answer, No we truly own both in a right sense, but we say the Service of those Instruments that the Lord sends are to be fulfilled on a Spiritual account, and therefore *such as come in the Name of Christ; gather to him and not unto themselves*; for like their Master they bear witness to the truth and make

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themselves of no Reputation, throwing their Crowns down constantly at the feet of their Lord, affirming freely as well as truly that their Service must be fulfilled for Righteousnes sake, by every one that comes to know the Lord present and sufficient. For where Christ takes the Government the Service of the Instrument is swallowed up; and therefore must as really decrease, as in the *Baptist's* time; and they that do not Preach it as well as he know not that self-denyal he taught; *and yet the least in the Kingdom is greater than he.*

And as to Elders; they are such as are more grown up in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ then others are, and 'tis true their Service is to go Armed before their Brethren, in Order to lead them into rest, which their Souls have tasted of; and by bringing them into that State, that their Service might be discharged, such seek not to set it up as perpetual, but to have it finished; of this we have a Figure in those of *Israel* that received the Lot of their Inheritance, before they pass'd over *Jordan*, yea were they strong Men to go Armed before their Brethren, but it was as their Servants not as their Masters. For they was not to be followed but as they were the followers of *Joshua* the Figure of the true Jesus; and here both them that did follow, and them that went before did know that their Service of going before was to be fulfilled and discharged, so that as the one part did truly desire rest, that they should have no occasion for their Brethren's Service, so did the other both desire and expect it, that they might be discharged of it: and this is a true Figure of the Eldership in Christ. For indeed as such are more grown up into the Nature and Spirit of our Lord, by so much they do the more resemble him in his self-denyal, humility and Service. So that tho they go Armed before their Brethren, yet they freely affirm their Brethren are not to follow them, but as

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they are the followers of Christ; and all true followers of such Elders might have a measure of the same Spirit; therefore all such Elders direct to the Spirit of Truth. For without that they can neither be truly known or followed. But such Elders like their Master makes little Figure in the World, and therefore cannot be known aright but in a Spiritual way, and are as little known as followed. But that the Practices of such may be the better known, we will remind you of what you have recommended to other, which if but truly observed might help us much in our case. You give it in your 5th Cause of Persecution, Addres to *Protestants Pages* 241) it followes *another reason* (of Persecution) *and that no small one, is selfe-love and Impatiency of Men under contradiction, be it out of Ignorance, that they are angry with what they cannot refute, or out of private Interest it matters not, their Opinion must Reign alone they are tenacious of their own sense, and cannot endure to have it questioned, be there never so much reason for it, Men of these Passions are yet to learn, they are Ignorant of Religion by the want they have of Mortification, such Persons can easily let go their hold on Charity to lay violent hands upon their opposers if they have Power they rarely fail to use it so, not remembring, that when they absolved themselves from the tye of Love, Meekness and Patience they have abandoned true Religion, and contend not for the Faith once delivered to the Saints which stood therein, but for meer words;*

It is here that proud flesh and a capricious head disputes for Religion, and not an humble heart, and Divine frame of Spirit. Men that are angry for God, Passionate for Christ, and that call Names for Religion and flings Stones and Persecute for Faith, may tell us they are Christians if they will, but no body would know them to be such by their fruits; to be sure they are no Christians of Christs making, I would to

God the disputants of our time did but calmly weigh the Irreligiousness of their own heats for Religion, and see if what they contend for will quit the Cost, will countervail the Charge of departing from Charity and making a Sacrifice for Peace to gain their Points; upon so seasonable a reflection I am confident they would find that they rather shew their love to Opinion then truth, and seek Victory more then Concord.

Could men (Pray mind it) be contented, as he whom they call their Lord was, to declare their Message and not strive for Proselites, nor vex for Conquest, they would recommend all to the Conscience, and, if it must be so, patiently endure contradiction too, and so lay their Religion, as he did his, not in violence but in suffering. But I must freely profess, and in duty and Conscience I do it, that I cannot call that Religion which is introduced against the Lawes of Love, Meeknes and Friendship: Superstition, interest or Faction I may. There is a Zeal without knowledge, that is Superstition, there is a Zeal against Knowledge, that is Interest or Faction, the true Heresie, there is a Zeal with Knowledge that is Religion. Therefore blind Obedience may be Superstition, it can't be Religion, and if you will view the Countrys of Cruelty, you shall find them Superstitious rather then Religious. Religion is gentle, it makes men better, more Friendly, loving, and Patient, then before, and the success which followed Christianity, while the Antient Professors of it betook themselves to no other defence, plainly proves the force of those passive Arguments above all corporal punishments, and that we must never hope for the same Prosperity till we fall into the same Methods. Are men Impatient of having their conceits owned? They are then most to be suspected (pray mind it) Error and Superstition, like cracht Titles, only fear to be search'd and run and cry for Authority and number. Truth is plain and stedfast without Arts or tricks, will you receive her, well; if not, there is no compulsion. But pray

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tell me, what is that desired Uniformity that has not Unity, and that Unity which has not Love, Meekness and Patience in it? I beseech you hear me, for those Men depart from the Spirit of Christianity, that seek with Anger and Frowardness to promote it. Let us not put so miserable a Cheat upon our selves, nor such an affront upon Christianity, as to think that a most gentle and Patient Religion can be advanced by most ingentle and impatient ways. I should sooner submit to an humble Opposion, then to the greatest Zealot in the World, and sooner deliver my self up to him that would modestly drop a Controverted truth, then to such as seek tempestiously to carry it, &c. I have quoted this largely, it is both so Christian and pertinent to our purpose; for certainly you ought to practise what you have advised others to, for the little foxes are to be taken as well as the great ones, and not only persecution removed, as it stands in Corporal Punishments, but the ground of it: And certainly such as are true Elders in Christ's Church will write after this Copy; and therefore 'tis impossible they should strive for their Opinion, no that is not the way into the Kingdom and patience of the Son of God. So that like their Lord and Master, if they have any Government, they take it by Patience and suffering; which as it is contrary to the Kingdom and Government of this World, so 'tis contrary to the nature, end and aim of all the carnal Professions of Religion, but how Conform you are to the one and contrary to the other, is clear, by the Imposing of your Opinions. For 'tis matter of fact, that the Imposing of your Opinions contrary to what is above hath been the occasion both of our dissatisfaction and division; and pray what are these Opinions but a Circumstance and Ceremony; Now for you to indeavour to destroy the liberty of Examination on purpose that you may bring in your opinions, that are but as Circumstance and Ceremony, this makes way for Lordship and Dominion, and that can

not come in, but Ignorance and Slavery muſt follow. For not to Examine what we are to receive is to be Ignorant, but to be deprived of Choice is the Original of Slavery. Indeed if we muſt be inſlav'd after our Confeſſion to ſo much Freedom and underſtanding, Ignorance ſeems the beſt Medium to make us Patient to bear it; whiles to know and to be Impoſed upon muſt needs be grievous. In ſhort, there is nothing that can emonſtrate you more to be the Servants of Chriſt and that you truly honour him, then when like him, you can freely leave what you Propoſe to be Examin'd if true. But how much more ought you to avoid the Impoſing of your Opinions: For if we muſt receive things becauſe you ſay it, and not becauſe we know them to be true; Our Building then like others will be on humane Authority, and not on the truth; and as nothing can more manifeſt you to be dead unto ſelf, and to the Rudiments and wayes of the World in this matter, and ſo alive unto God, then when you can freely leave what you bring to be examined; ſo nothing can more conduce to conſerve that honour we owe unto the Lord our Head, preſerve us a knowing and underſtanding People, and ſecure us from being Impoſed upon, then for us conſcienciouſly to reſerve and keep the Liberty of Examination. For once let that go through any confidence in Man and as the Reverance is Implicit, the Obedience is blind; 'tis no matter what Name of diſtinction thoſe Men go under, to whom we pay an Implicit Veneration; Ignorance and Slavery muſt follow: and where the effect is the ſame, the cauſe cannot differ in or about the [illegible] of Men. When we conſider what you have wrote againſt Impoſition at divers times, and particularly in *Addreſs* to *Proteſtants*; the ſecond part being wholly to that purpoſe; what can thinking Men ſay, but that you ſhewed your parts well againſt Impoſition,

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as many had done before; but when you ſhould have given the Example unto the World, (which indeed they want in a Body of Men on a Religious ſcore,) and ſo have proved the truth of your Precepts or good Advice by your own Practiſe, here you fail'd and have been as difficient as others. So blind is ſelf, ſo partial is Intereſt, that Men cannot make the caſe of others their own; and therefore do not give what themſelves did but juſt now Inſiſt to receive, not as a favour but as a right, and this hath blaſted all the Reformation to this day. It was not for nothing that *Iſrael* was commanded not to oppreſs Strangers; no certainly it ought to teach you to have been kind upon the account of Conſcience to Diſſenters, who had ſuffer'd your ſelves ſo much for the one, and pleaded ſo little for the other.

Indeed had you but cordially made the caſe of others your own; and applyed unto your ſelves what you wrote to others, but in *Addreſs to Proteſtants*; it would have been needleſs to have inſerted any part of it here, becauſe you could not but have freely given unto your Brethren what you inſiſted to receive from others; and then we ſhould have had no difference, and that it is more bleſſed to give then to receive, as its greater to ſhew mercy then to receive it, is certainly true. But not doing this, but inſtead of it to rectiminate Perſons for ſeperateing, and for being diſſatisfyed is the occaſion that we have quoted *Addreſs to Proteſtants* ſeveral times, and do yet further add ſome paſſages; the firſt is *Pages* 79 & 80. where you ſay, *to conclude, if ye deſire Peace, Love, Truth, ſeek Piety, and hate Hypocriſie, diſcard all thoſe things called Articles of Faith and Canons of the Church, that are not to be found in expreſs terms of Scripture, or ſo plainly Authorized by Scripture, as may with eaſe be diſcerned by every honeſt and Conſcientious Perſon; and in room of numerous and diſputed Opinions made*

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the bonds of external communion, left ſome plain general and neceſſary truths be laid down, and let them be few.

Was it right in thoſe you wrote too, to take away thoſe things? And is it not wrong in you to impoſe ſuch things as give Occaſion? And if it was juſt and right in them to take theirs away, is it not right in you to take yours away? There is nothing but ſelf-love that can hinder. For it will hold as true in our caſe, being nothing but the Old Cauſe new Varniſht. But to go on (in *Addreſs to Proteſtants* 85 *Page*) you tell us, that *the belief of Jeſus of* Nazereth *to be the Meſſiah, the Son and Chriſt of God, ſent to reſtore and ſave Mankind, is the firſt, and was then the only requiſit Article of Faith, without any large confeſſions, or a heap of Principles and Opinions*, &c. And you proceed to prove this confeſſion truly made to be ſufficient for Communion, and to that end alſo anſwer all the uſual Objections *Page* 91 and 92; the laſt Objection is this, ſay you, *if it be alledged that this will take in all Parties, yee that Schiſmaticks and Hereticks will creep in under this Confeſſion, ſince few of them will refuſe to make it*; to this you anſwer, *I do ſay* (ſayes the Author) *'twould be an happy day, what Man loves God and Chriſt, ſeeks Peace and concord, that would not rejoyce if all our Animoſities and vexations about matters of Religion were buryed in this one Confeſſion of Jeſus the great Author and Lord of the Chriſtian Religion, ſo often loſt in pretending to conteſt for it?* O Friends! Have not you been greatly wanting to the World here in an example to your Brethren? whom you acknowledge to be one with you in the Worſhip and Doctrine of Truth, and therefore can never want thoſe requeſit Articles for Communion. O that you could ſee in this your day of tryal the things that belong to your Peace! Now that you may not think much that we ſhould thus remind you, becauſe

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we are to examine what we are to receive, we will take notice of a little part that you have quoted out of *Jacobus Arminius* to ſtrengthen what you there write, and therefore ought to be of more force to conclude you. You begun with him in the 157 *Page* and continue to the 172 to the ſame purpoſe; but the Place we note is in 162 and followes thus *and becauſe a thing will be ſo much the better preſerved, by how much the greater is the Number of thoſe that keep it, the People ought often to be put in mind that both the Reading of the Scriptures and the care of Religion belong, not to the Paſtors of the Church only,* (that is in our caſe not to the Preachers and Elders only) *but that every one that would be ſaved* (Pray mark it) *ought to make diligent ſearch whether corruption be all ready or* (mind it) *is for the future like to be introduced, and* (mark) *this to do no leſs carefully than if he was perſwaded that all beſides himſelfe was aſleep,* (no fear then or hazzard of being ſingular) *and* (mind) *whatſoever is wont to take off the Common People* (that is ſuch as are neither Elders nor Paſtors) *from ſuch ſtudy, care muſt be taken that that thing* (obſerve) *be wholly taken away.* And pray who muſt take this away in our caſe but the Preachers and Elders? And how muſt they take it away but by letting every one know that is neither Preachers nor Elders, that if they expect to be ſaved, the care of Religion belongs to them as well as it doth to the Preachers and Elders, and therefore they ought to examine things and not to believe them true only becauſe ſuch as eſteem themſelves Paſtors and Elders ſay it; but becauſe they themſelves know they are true. And we are ſure if this will hold any where it will hold in our caſe; where we confeſs but one Lord and Head. But alas! Inſtead of this good Method to take away what hurts Examination, you are endeavouring all you can to eſtabliſh and confirm what you ought to take away, telling us, *thoſe things do*

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not belong to Faith Conſciente and Religion, and ſo not to us to Examine that are to be govern'd and rul'd, but to you that are our Elders and Teachers; for that is the Natural Conſequence of this great ſtrife for your Opinions. But as what is above proves we ought to Examine things and that ſtrictly, ſo what followes confirms that we ought to have a choiſe as well as Examination. For in *Page* 149 it followes, *to check this exhorbitancy the Apoſtle* Paul *demands, Who art thou that Judgeſt anothers Servant? To his own Lord he ſtands or falls; which ſhewes with great evidence* (ſay you) *that Chriſtians of all ſorts great and ſmall, are but Brethren* (*to be ſure*) *and conſequently* (Pray mark) *all Superiority, Lordſhip, and Impoſition are excluded* (*to be ſure.*) *But if there be a difference* (*among Chriſtians*) *'tis in this, that as Chriſt taught, he that is greateſt is to be Servant to the reſt*; (but ſay you) *what is more oppoſite to a Servant then a Lord? And to Service then Injunction, and that on Penalties too? Here it is that Chriſt is only Lord and Lawgiver, who is only King of this inward Kingdom of the Soul*; *and 'tis to be noted* (obſerve) *that the Apoſtle did not write this to a private Brother, or in ſome ſpecial caſe, but to the Church* (obſerve) *as a general ſtanding truth and therefore* (ſay you) *now as authentick and proper as then*; *and if this be true, I cannot ſee* (ſayes our Author) *how any or even the moſt part of the Church* (obſerve for it is patt to our caſe,) *that are ſtill but Brethren to the reſt, of one Voluntary Communion and Profeſſion, can with any ſhew of reaſon Impoſe upon them* (of the ſame Community) *and eſcape the reproof of this Scripture.* (and pray mind, to confirm all this what followes) *for* (ſayes our Author) *all Societies are to govern themſelves according to their Inſtitution and firſt Principles of Union*; *where there is violence on this part, Tyrany and not Order is introduced*; *Now ſince Perſwaſion and Conviction began all true Chriſtian Societies*, (and therefore ours to be ſure in your ſenſe)

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all Christian Societies must uphold themselves upon the same free terms (to be sure) *or they turn Antichristian. I beseech you* (sayes the Author) *here let us Examine our selves faithfully*, indeed that is it we would be at, and the want of that is the cause of our Misery,) *and I am of belief* (sayes the Author) *that something will appear amongst us, that shews great Reverence to that free Name.* What do you say will not all this hold you? Can any thing be more to the purpose against Imposition, or more pertinant to our case? Seeing 'tis Imposition that excluded Us the same Society [redacted]; and ought any thing to be more considered and vallued as Obligeing then what you have said your selves? And yet that you have Imposed your Opinions upon your Brethren is matter of Fact, truly not to be as good as your word in so Sollemn an Occasion lessens your Credit, as well as 'tis a dishonour to God, being unrighteous in it self. What you can say to come off, we do not know; except you will indeavour to Improve this new distinction, that you have made; that is, that those are Civil things and not Religious. But we have shewed that distinction to be dangerous in our Case alone; and here will a little Examine the difference betwixt your Plea for Imposition, and those you reprehend. You say *such have made Opinions Articles of Faith, and those Articles of Faith terms of Communion*; now to avoid this rock on which they split, you will not make your Opinions Articles of Faith: No, for *they do not concern Faith*, You say; but still you will make them terms of External Communion, and pray where's the difference? Sure 'tis only in Name; for the Consequence and effect is the same, to wit, *Distinction and Division*. Indeed if there is any difference, your way of making the difference is the worse of the two, as not having so much to plead for it, as those may have that

you reprehend. As thus, they might believe what they did was right, and so might plead Conscience for making Opinions Articles of Faith, and then them Articles Terms of Communion, though mistaken. But you can not plead Conscience for Imposing your Opinions, while you do again and again say, they do not concern Conscience. But take Notice, no Imposition can be Just, where Conscience cannot be pleaded, and Conscience in this Case (generally speaking) can never be truly pleaded, but where Persons goes into a known evil or neglect a known Duty; which can never be made out in your case against your Brethren; but further in this passage you tell us *that Conscience is allowed us.*

Your words is Suspicious, as well as dangerous; *For who can dispense with Conscience but he that is Lord of Conscience?* But if you intend *that Conscience is unconcern'd*, as the following words may Import; then does this prove what is above, that you cannot plead Conscience for Imposing upon your Brethren in those things. And pray then what can you plead for Imposing but your Will and Power? But lastly you bid us, *(the Visible ground of Distance being so small,) weigh with our selves by what has been, what may the consequence of this lamentable breach.* Must this affect us and not you, whiles we tell you that Conscience is concerned; and you tell us it is not? Does this bespeak you Conscienctous? No verily, this rather bespeaks that you have lost the tenderness of Conscience, that thus seek to baffle Conscience to please you. For once sacrifice that, and farewel true Religion. But go too, is the Point little for us to comply with, and great for you to omitt? What say you, is not that a kind of contradiction? And where shall we find this unreasonable Language most in use but amongst the Imposers of Opi-

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nions and Ceremonies? Which certainly you ought to Note; if it were but to avoid their company. But is the matter little indeed, and did you introduce this to fit us for greater things, or did you by this intend to Number the People that you might know the greatneſs of your ſtrength and largeneſs of your Dominion by the Subjection of the People? If that was it we cannot hope for a redreſs: For that would be to loſe the deſign and end. But if it was for the good of the People, as we ſuppoſe you will pretend, then ſeeing a contrary effect is brought forth, that is, in ſtead of Love and good will, (*the effect of true Religion,*) Strife, Debate, and Diviſion ariſes; can you [redacted] the cure of this evil, which hath attended the impoſing of your Opinions, then make your Opinions indifferent? And what harm can there be in this? For your Brethren to do their buſineſs without Womens Meeting for Government, whiles you acknowledge *they own the end, and are one in Judgement with you in the Worſhip and Doctrine of truth.*

We doe ſincerely beſeech you ſeriouſly to conſider of theſe things, for your own good, for our Peace, and for the glory of God, and true Religion, *that brings forth Peace on Earth, good will to Men and glory to God on high.* For we can ſay in truth what we have writ is not for Contention, but for Peace, not for deſtruction, but for Information, and therein for Edification. We are not Ignorant, but what we have Writ may be controverted by ſuch as are not willing to make the beſt of things, and take things in the beſt ſenſe. For what Writing can eſcape a Cavilling Mind? Since 'tis clear that the Scripture (if it were Mens Intreſt) might be ſet at odds. Nay we ſee that one and the ſame word has different meanings given to it, by different apprehenſions of Men; then how much

[illegible] spoken of as it? However [illegible] may [illegible] danger all we can, we will endeavour to bring [illegible] sent differences into as little compass as we can; and therefore as we have several times upon occasion stated the matter in this Book, so we do it now that you may take the better Notice of it at parting. Therefore we do say again, *There must be a necessity for that thing, that is brought in against your Brethrens consent, or otherwise you must set forth that you have a right under the Notion of Eldership to bring in and Impose upon us, that which in truth there is no necessity for.* You see we deny both, and have given our reasons for it: And therefore if you can [redacted] prove neither of those Points, and yet will not make your Opinions indifferent; then we must say, *that our Dissatisfaction is right, and Seperation on this account for quietness is really Just; and that all this noise that is made against Dissatisfaction and Division, is but to cover an ill Cause, and therefore is as the smoak of the bottomless Pit: Which darkens the Sun and Air, that things cannot be yet seen as they are;* but this will off; for the Sun will break through all those Clouds and Dissipate those Misty Foggs. Which that it may do quickly for the sake of the simple hearted, is the sincere desire of your well-wishing Friend.

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J. H.